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Introduction

Ever since the industrial revolution, mankind has generally believed that human society will always move forward in a positive way and will steadily improve. However, this belief has been shaken in recent years by world turmoil and the shocks of the global economic crisis and by a succession of natural disasters. All over the world, even in the advanced economies like the United States, Europe, and Japan, young people cannot find work, the middle class is shrinking, the wealth gap is widening, and social stability is being challenged. Destruction of the natural environment is growing with more disasters like earthquakes, tsunamis, hurricanes, and mudslides. Manmade disasters such as wars, nuclear leaks, water, and air pollution are also taking their toll. Superficially, all of these seem to be the consequences of unbalanced economic development and unequal resource distribution, but the deeper reasons lie in culture.

In the case of China, matters of culture are now coming to the fore after 30 years of rapid economic growth since 1978 when the reforms first began. The eroding of our traditional value system is undermining traditional morality and resulting in conflicts between different sets of values. In recent years, new issues have emerged such as relations with neighboring countries, how to engage in a dialogue with the world, and how to improve understanding between China and the international community. There is a growing realization that China is not only facing issues of economic growth but also those of cultural direction and evolution.

In fact, this matter of culture has already become a global issue. Interest in it is nothing new, since it began in the 1990s after the collapse of the Soviet Union that altered the world political configuration, so that former ideological conflicts became instead a "clash of civilizations." In his *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (1996),[1] American writer Samuel Huntington argues that culture plays a major role in shaping world politics, and this drew attention to the features of culture and civilization. He says, "This paradigm [of clash of civilizations]…has been neglected by Western scholars in international relations for long; meanwhile, people all over the world are redefining their identification in accordance with

[1] Preface to the Chinese edition, Xinhua Press, 2010, p. 2.

culture." His work caused a considerable stir and was translated into dozens of languages, and his views are widely debated in many countries.

At about the same time, the Chinese scholar and social scientist Fei Xiaotong proposed his ideas of "cultural self-awareness" and the axiom "each appreciates his own best, appreciates the best of others, all appreciate the best together for the greater harmony of all." He wrote a great many papers and articles expounding these concepts and also gave many talks. Whereas Huntington's ideas originated from the collapse of the Soviet Union, the end of the Cold War, and the reconfiguration of world geopolitics and focused on the ensuing cultural conflicts, Fei's concept of cultural self-awareness centered on how civilizations could coexist against a backdrop of rapid globalization. Huntington expressed his concern for the future of the world, particularly the future of Western civilization in the face of a rising East Asia, stronger China, and fractious and divided Islamic countries. His is a typically Western view of the world. On the other hand, Fei's view is one of harmony that incorporates differences, coexistence with diversity, and interaction between different cultures.

One was a Western scholar, the other an Eastern one, and as their ways of thinking differed, so did their views on culture. Each described future social development with the concomitant need to rebuild world order, but one placed the emphasis on cultural conflict while the other on cultural coexistence. One posited the need for a universalist world order to which different cultural conflicts must conform, while the other argued for mutual understanding, dialogue, mutual appreciation, and respect in resolving conflicts to create a basis for a common world order that all could accept. Both these perspectives and ways of thinking are important, but Fei's is more moderate and flexible.

Huntington's ideas are already well known thanks to his book, but Fei's ideas on cultural coexistence were not consolidated into a single work in his lifetime. Instead, they are scattered throughout his writings and talks during the 1990s and the early 2000s before his death. That is why they are not widely known today. Even in China, at the time fully engrossed in economic development, his ideas aroused only limited interest in academic circles and were not given wider attention. As Fei himself said, "I am saying today what will be said in the future."[2] That is why it is a good time now to reread what he said then.

The present volume, *Globalization and Cultural Self-awareness*, is compiled at the request of the Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press. It includes the writings, speeches, and conversations of Fei Xiaotong on this topic taken from the last 10 years of his life, from the 1990s to the early 2000s.

The book consists of six parts, and I briefly summarize them as follows.

Part I contains four chapters: "Educating for the 21st Century," "Building Harmony in Diversity," "Thoughts on a 'Good Society'," and "Appreciate the Best Together and Human Civilization." In these, Fei Xiaotong describes his vision of how societies through mutual respect can achieve mutual appreciation, attain

[2] From "A Higher Cultural Trend," from *Fei Xiaotong's Later Ideas*, Ed. Fang Lili, Qiulu Press, 2005, p. 12.

harmony while living with differences, and so build a political environment where civilizations can coexist.

In Part II, the three chapters "Some Thoughts on Cultural Self-awareness," "Cultural Self-awareness and the Historical Responsibility of Chinese Scholars," and "From Retrospection to Cultural Self-awareness and Exchange" describe in greater detail Fei's concept of cultural self-awareness and lay out how he believes China and Chinese scholars can meet the challenge of globalization and, by bringing this vision of cultural self-awareness to the international scene, achieve their own transformation.

Part III comprises four chapters: "Thoughts on the Historical and Social Nature of Culture," "Diversity within Integration," "Challenges Facing Chinese Culture in the New Century," and "Towards a Higher Culture." Here, Fei describes the different features that characterize Chinese civilization and expresses his aspirations for the new contributions it can make at this turning point in world social development.

The chapters in Part IV, "Rethinking the Relationship between Man and Nature in Culture Theory," "Rethinking Cultural Values," "Thoughts on the Advance of Industrial Civilization," and "Cultural Issues in the Course of Global Integration," ponder the new relationships between man and nature, man and society, and man and man in a period of globalization and how these interrelations can deal with the new challenges.

Part V gathers three chapters: "Extending the Traditional Boundaries of Sociology," "Chinese Culture and Social Anthropology in the New Century," and "Pioneering a New Academic Trend." These discuss the new missions, directions, and insights of sociology and anthropology under new social and historical conditions and how Fei hopes that the new research will provide scientific backing and theories for increased coexistence of civilizations and cultural awareness.

Part VI gathers five chapters: "Thoughts on the Cultural Resources of the Western Regions," "Nine Visits to Lanzhou—a Talk," "Cultural Tradition and Innovation," "Cultural Considerations on the Opening of the Western Regions," and "From the People." Here, Fei takes another look at traditional Chinese culture and discusses how to uncover resources within it as a basis for developing a new culture.

Finally, I have included an edited transcript, "My Early Years," taken from a conversation I had with Fei Xiaotong. It is included here to help the reader obtain a clearer understanding of how his academic thinking came about and evolved. As he himself often said, a person's family and experiences growing up often determine what this person aspires to in later life.

Above is an account of the reasons for compiling this volume and selecting these articles. I hope together they will give readers a more systematic and fuller understanding of Fei Xiaotong's ideas on cultural self-awareness, so that they can continue down this path of his thinking to further ponder issues of cultural development, both of China and the world. I welcome all comments on any deficiencies in the collection.

August 2013 Fang Lili

Part I

Chapter 1
Educating for the Twenty-First Century

People always live in hope, and their aspirations and expectations for the future will determine their moods and behaviors in the present. This is very natural, which is why I would like to use this opportunity to talk about my expectations for childhood education for the twenty-first century.

For someone like me, who has lived 80 years in the twentieth century, the idea of the twenty-first century starting in 10 years time fills me with mixed feelings of anticipation and apprehension. Our knowledge of the past assures us that mankind constantly moves forward, that things always improve, and this of course is cause for optimism. However, on further thought one wonders, will the people of today with their current ways of thinking and attitudes be able to successfully adapt to the fast-changing world of tomorrow? It is this question that has led me to realize the importance of early childhood education for the next millennium. We must begin now to nurture those who will live in the twenty-first century. Man creates this world, and man must also create those who will live in it. That means education and training. Early childhood includes infants and young children, and their learning in this period lays the foundation for later physical and emotional growth.

However, we must first ask ourselves, what kind of world will this be in the twenty-first century? Because it seems to me that if we allow those with a twentieth-century frame of mind to enter unchanged into the new millennium, there could be some very unwelcome results. This concern comes from the realization that the next century will be very different from this one. The objective world will have changed, so will the ways of life formed before those changes took place be able to deal with the new environment? This is the problem and is why we must first of all figure out how the twenty-first century will be different from the twentieth.

Describing this in a few words is practically impossible, because it would be neither accurate nor complete. Allow me, however, to use an analogy from Chinese

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history that might not be entirely appropriate, that is, it seems to me the twentieth century is rather like a Warring States Period but spread all over the world. This period in China lasted for about 200 years from 475 to 221 BC and was when political division evolved into integration. Today, China is a unified whole, but this took centuries to achieve, and the most important period was during the Warring States when a number of separate kingdoms coalesced into a single, unified empire. I use this analogy because it seems to me the world today is gradually moving from division toward unity. The twentieth century is precisely that period of division before the unity. After all, in the last 100 years two major "world wars" have wracked our planet, something that could never have happened on such a scale before, so "world wars" are the principle feature of this century, hence my analogy of the Warring States.

For those of my generation who lived through them, the memory of those two wars can never be erased. During WWII, however, someone proposed the term "One World." I used to see it as a result of that war: we had become so tightly connected that we even spoke to each other with guns on a worldwide scale. No doubt, war is the result of conflict, yet that too is a kind of connection; after all, no fight over interests can take place between completely isolated or insulated entities. Conflict represents connection, and at the end the links are even closer, resulting in some kind of joining together.

Some 2,000 years ago, the struggle for power that waged across the plains of China culminated in unification under the Qin, forming the core of today's modern unified China. So looking at the twentieth century from this perspective, I don't think it is a coincidence that the idea of "One World" has emerged from the "world war." Can we say that this is the harbinger of a global world society?

For a person of the twentieth century, it is emotionally difficult to accept that this century is a "Warring States Period" which has been characterized with the two world wars. Actually, I use this analogy only to highlight the concept of "one world" that has still not been achieved.

That the globe is becoming smaller and smaller is my deepest feeling in the short span of 80 years. I recall how, 70 years ago, a trip to my grandmother's house was a long boat ride down the river starting early in the morning. Lunch was taken on the hand-rowed wooden skiff, and we only arrived at dusk, a whole day on the way. From the map, the place is only 15 km away, and today with the new highway, it takes about 10 min if there is no congestion. Distance is now measured in terms of time. What once took a whole day can now be done several times over in the same period, because we don't take a small boat but ride in a car, and no one is surprised by any of this. Young people cannot sympathize with the sense of nostalgia I feel. However, we must not forget that such changes are the result of the great inventions of the twentieth century. Without rapid technological development, going to the moon would still be a lovely fairytale. We take all this progress for granted today, as if it were quite normal, but it represents a huge accumulation and change of human knowledge. Perhaps even more important is that humans have created the material and social conditions to make such accumulation and change possible. This has all happened so many times that we can only use the vague term "modernization" to

encapsulate it all. In my understanding, this term means the process by which continuous improvements in science and technology transform the material and non-material world around us.

In terms of human relationships, modernization means that the distance between people has shrunk, there are more and wider contacts, and no one can live without the other anymore. In other words, mankind has become enmeshed in a huge network of relationships, resulting in a large global society. In simple, concrete terms, modernization has taken villagers accustomed to living in small, self-sufficient rural communities and turned them into people who must keep in step with a huge world society that cannot function for a minute without a computer. This includes everything in modern urbanization, such as mechanization of production, commercialization of products, and high-speed information. In even more general terms, it's the shift from rural to postindustrial society.

I believe that it is mankind's common destiny to accept this process of modernization. It began before the twentieth century and has taken a couple of hundred years to reach this present stage, and it will continue on into the twenty-first century. Originating in Western Europe, it spread in one direction to Eastern Europe and Western Asia, and then the European immigrants took it with them to the Americas and Australia. Modernization's spread to the rest of the world is one of the historical highlights of the twentieth century.

The history of mankind shows that peoples belonging to different nations, though existing on the same planet, have historically lived dispersed throughout many regions, each with its own lifestyle adapted to a specific place, though also having some contacts with nearby neighbors. Before the second half of the twentieth century, there was no gigantic network linking all these peoples together. But now there is the result of advances in science and technology over the last few centuries. Originally, these peoples' ways of life had all evolved in accordance with their various historical conditions and so their levels of economic development were different, and their cultures diverse. Now inevitably, they will accept modernization in different ways and at different speeds, which is why there is so much unevenness and diversity today.

On one level, the world is bound together by common interests, yet there is great economic disparity between nations and regions. The present level of science and technology has already provided sufficient resources to meet the basic needs of all human beings. The fact that millions are still hungry and live in poverty is because of bad distribution.

However, cultural diversity is a different thing altogether, because it includes distinctive value systems. It seems that it is easier for those struggling for survival to see eye to eye since their goals to meet their biological needs are similar. As we say, "the hungry are not picky about food." However, as life becomes better, individual differences come to the fore, and there is a tendency to part ways. That's also when nations and peoples express their different values more strongly, and that's why issues arising from such cultural diversity are different from those caused by economic imbalances.

Both these aspects have already had serious consequences, including even the two world wars. Economic problems, or "north-south issues," have to a certain extent already entered into everyone's consciousness, even though up until now no satisfactory solutions have been found.

In contrast, problems arising from cultural diversity are of a different nature and on another level. In its broadest sense, culture refers to the man-made world and includes social systems and ideologies. Conflict over the latter took a secondary place in the causes of the two world wars. However, after World War II, such ideological confrontation became an "East-West" issue and was the basis for half a century of Cold War. It is not until nearly the end of the twentieth century that there are signs of dialogue replacing confrontation. Yet there still is no common understanding of how to accept and deal with cultural diversity in this integrating world order.

Different cultures appeared on the earth in tandem with human beings. I say this because I subscribe to the theory of multiple human origins. Archaeological finds from many places in the world show that early man seems to have existed in very similar ways, such as living in caves and using stone implements, which has given rise to the hypothesis of one single origin. However, similar ways of living do not necessarily mean they all come from a single source. Man has built his world on the basis of natural conditions, so culture was born from nature and is a kind of processing of it. In the earliest times, mankind lived very close to the natural world and was restricted by it. People living in different places evolved their culture from the natural conditions surrounding them, and if these were similar, then their ways of living would also be similar.

That is why I believe that right from the beginning the human world was a pluralistic place and that it continued to evolve toward greater cultural diversity. By the twentieth century, places and people that had developed relatively independently of each other have now become linked and brought together by transportation, information, and economics. Encounters between diverse cultures, including social systems, have propelled these differences to the fore, where they are often manifested in the form of confrontation, often known as "East versus West." These issues will continue and become more urgent as we enter the twenty-first century. Consequently, any talk of educating people to adapt to the coming millennium can certainly not avoid the important topic of cultural diversity.

Will cultural diversity gradually disappear in the course of modernization, just as economic imbalances will in the process of development? Since modernization is a common trend for all peoples, it might seem that economies will become more equal and cultures more homogenous. In fact, things are probably a great deal more complicated than that.

Modernization has increased human mobility and extended contacts. What were previously small, closed unchanging communities have, under the influence of reforms and outside pressures, gradually become world societies or organic parts of a global society. In this process, some common features will certainly emerge. After all, without commonly recognized signs and symbols to communicate information, humans would not be able to talk to each other or cooperate. While one of the clear

proofs of cultural diversity lies in the many different languages spoken, it's also true that if people cannot understand each other, they cannot work together. As the process of integration proceeds, a commonly used language is usually a first requirement, which means a system of symbols and signs that everyone can understand, so it could be argued that this is an evidence of cultures converging.

There is no doubt that this is happening in the course of modernization. On the other hand, an interesting development is that while a common language is forming, individuals are also learning more languages. Esperanto was created to be a completely new language different from all existing ones. I don't know how many people actually use it in daily international communication, but I have seen how a common computer language has already spread all over the world and is employed in many sophisticated cultural settings. Its role in communication is only going to become more pronounced as modernization proceeds. However, for ordinary people it seems that these global symbols are not as useful or as widely used internationally as the English language. At the present time, those who speak English have no problems getting around in any international airport, hotel, or restaurant in major cities. Increasingly, people are starting to learn English, so there are more and more individuals who now speak several languages.

As the world comes together, cultural diversity produces two completely opposite effects: on the one hand, a common language emerges for everyone, and on the other, the individual becomes more multilingual. The fact that people from different cultures can use a common language is actually because they know several languages in the first place. Thus, global cultural diversity increases the interacting individuals' cultural diversity.

However, the other components that make up culture are not the same as language, which after all is a tool whose value lies in the extent to which it succeeds in conveying a message. It has a utilitarian value, without any emotional choices of good or bad. This is uncommon in culture, which more often consists of value judgments of love and hate, right and wrong, often closely bound up with the sense of self-respect of a people or a place, which makes culture a very sensitive issue. Each individual is familiar with his or her way of living and relies upon it to carry out daily activities within the group. A hallmark of closed societies is the clear sense of difference from others, the feeling of self-sufficiency and self-approbation. Once the force of economics breaks down the barriers of complacency of a country, a nation, or a place, the resulting antagonisms are always between conflicting value systems. Inevitably there will be many clashes as multiple cultures gradually learn to accommodate and integrate. It is truly a period in which "a hundred schools of thought contend."

This kind of contention can lead to two different results. In one scenario, clashes over right and wrong deteriorate into outright physical confrontation leaving one side victorious and the other defeated. That was the final outcome of the Warring States Period in China, which ended up united under one hegemon. The other scenario is that the differences in values lead to "the blooming of a hundred flowers," in which each culture not only appreciates itself but is also open to the best in others. In other words, all value systems accept the existence of diversity. The history of

religion in China provides examples of this, in which multiple religions existed peacefully in parallel, without any outbreak of religious wars.

In today's world, the closely interlinked global system formed by economic growth and scientific progress demonstrates instances in which the two scenarios described are playing out on many levels in different cultures. North America provides a testing ground for integration of different immigrant cultures. In the United States and Canada, there is a very strong sense of common values encompassing the whole of society, yet beneath there is also an undeniable diversity. So cultural commonality and diversity exist and develop in tandem in the course of modernization.

In Europe, the situation is somewhat different. Modernization there is similar to North America, but cultural diversity seems to be stronger than cultural commonality. In Asia, Africa, and Latin America, which began modernizing later and are still developing, cultural diversity is even more pronounced.

If we look toward the next century from this perspective, then it seems that cultural diversity will still be one of the reasons for confrontation within this global integration. Can we then hypothesize that one of the major issues to be resolved in the twenty-first century will be how people from different cultures and with different values can coexist peacefully in a world that is being pulled closer together by economics? How can people live together in peace on this small planet? And that brings me back to the theme of this gathering.

I have been a teacher for over 50 years, but I am not a scholar of pedagogy, so I only have an ordinary understanding of education, that is, to nurture and form people. This is necessary because human being is not born knowing how to live and behave. This must be learned from an early age. The first sentence of the *Confucian Analects* states "to learn with a constant perseverance and application." Humans must learn from society, and society must educate humans. It all comes to the same thing.

Modern psychology tells us that human behavior is habitual; in other words when something is learned and repeatedly practiced, it becomes automatic, a habit. Most of what people do and think in daily life is performed as a habit. Once these habits are formed, they are very hard to change, which is why early childhood education is especially important. There is a Chinese expression "from the age of 3 to old age" which means character formed in early childhood lasts all the way to old age. The story of Mencius'[1] mother moving three times in order to find a good learning environment for her son is an example of stressing early childhood education.

Seen from this angle, if we are concerned about how people in the twenty-first century are going to coexist and grow peacefully together in this interconnected world, then we must think about early childhood education. If the main features of the next century will be uneven economic development and cultural diversity, then what principles should we follow to educate those who will live and work in it? Let me propose some initial ideas.

[1] 372–289 BC, major Confucian thinker, educator, and political figure during the Warring States Period, author of *Mencius*, a compilation of his philosophical teachings, political thought and activities.

It is common knowledge that the leaps and bounds of science and technology in the second half of the twentieth century can be attributed to educational reform in a number of countries. From a young age, children are encouraged to enjoy contact with physical objects, to experiment and create, and to develop rational thinking skills through exploring the rules that govern reality. This kind of scientific thinking and behavior is inculcated into people when they are quite young. In contrast, I recall the situation in China in the early years of the twentieth century, which demonstrates the huge difference in educational practice and even in direction. In those days, the goal of early childhood learning was to form children's minds and behavior so that they conformed to traditional rules and norms. This is why education started with rote memorization of the classics, and learning them meant becoming educated. This kind of education had its functions in a static and closed society. Many of my peers also started out with learning the "Four Classics"[2] by heart, though they also had some contact with the new rules and norms. This new model of early childhood education is a reform of the rigid traditional model. If I may draw upon my own experience, my mother was one of the pioneers to advocate the new model of childhood education and she set up a kindergarten in our hometown. Reforms did start quite early in China, but subsequent developments were unsatisfactory.

If progress in science and technology is one of the prime motors of economic growth, then it is extremely important that educational reforms are put in place so that people can adjust to this requirement. Such reforms in the developed countries are still not complete, but they have already acquired much experience that can be useful to developing countries. Here I particularly wish to emphasize that, in order to rectify the present imbalance of economic development and achieve worldwide prosperity, not only the advanced countries need to review and put together their experience in early childhood education, the developing countries too must collect their own experiences for others to learn from, so that they can catch up faster.

Another aspect of particular concern to me is how to educate and train people to be able to coexist peacefully in the multicultural world of the twenty-first century. I am concerned because at this point, it seems to me that education in most countries pays very little attention to this.

Countries, nations, races, and religions are coming into closer and more frequent contact, thanks to the world becoming smaller, and this is making their relationships much more complicated. The tribal and racial conflicts inherited from the past that used to be resolved through open confrontation can now no longer be dealt with in that way because of scientific and technological advances. In such a tightly knit world, a single spark could set off a blaze, since weapons of mass destruction would no longer threaten only the adversaries in a war but would endanger the whole of mankind. This is already common knowledge, so now the focus should be on how to prevent such conflicts from becoming serious confrontations. However, up until the present, the main thinking has been on reducing or destroying such weapons. No better path has been found in the twentieth century.

[2] *Works of Mencius* (*Mengzi*), *Confucian Analects* (*Lunyu*), *Great Learning* (*Da xue*), *Golden Mean* (*Zhongyong*).

I would like to propose that we discuss the possibility of developing a whole new educational system that would place the emphasis on teaching for peaceful coexistence, mutual understanding, and tolerance. I would call this system "cross-cultural communication" and would include the basic principles for living together in the twenty-first century. Ideals and concepts for guiding interpersonal behavior and the relationship of people to society and people to nature would be taught to each person from earliest childhood. This falls within the purview of our discussion.

How to get along together is nothing new for individuals, tribes, or countries. Since time immemorial, peoples, nations, and states have had to resolve such problems; otherwise, we would not be here today. All continents and nations have many historical lessons and experiences. Recent proposals for dialogue to replace confrontation are already a good start. This means everyone needs to start out with the same frame of mind, that is, a spirit of equality and tolerance. Since we have a practical common interest to live together on this small planet, we should resolve disagreements primarily in a rational way. Those who will adapt to life in the twenty-first century must first and foremost have this kind of rational outlook, which must be taught from a young age. This is the major task of early childhood education.

I must apologize for the fact that I have neither sufficient knowledge nor experience in early childhood pedagogy, so I must leave to those better qualified as well as to those who concur to work out all the specifics of such an education.

Thank you.

July 30, 1989

Chapter 2
Building Harmony in Diversity

I was born in the early years of the twentieth century and am now in my 90s. Most of my life experiences have taken place in the twentieth century, and I feel extremely fortunate to have lived to the end of the century and to be witnessing the beginning of a new millennium.

I began studying anthropology on the advice of my Professor Mr. Wu Wenzao,[1] after my graduation from Yenjing University in 1933. I started my studies at Tsinghua University under Professor S. M. Shirokogoroff. At that time, Mr. Wu believed that Chinese social and cultural research must be based on anthropology and must employ anthropological research methods to study the society so as to transform the whole area of Chinese sociology. His idea was to create a school of Chinese sociology.

At the Graduate School in Tsinghua University, I was fortunate enough to study with Prof. Shirokogoroff. He was a world-class scholar trained in the traditional school, well known for his work on the Tungusic peoples. Continuing the long legacy of European anthropology, his expertise was extensive, including physical anthropology, linguistics, archaeology, and comparative culture. I was unable to complete my whole plan of study and training with him, only finishing the basics of physical anthropology (he had set me a 3-step course of study: physical anthropology, linguistics, and social anthropology). Of course, I also learned his rigorous scientific and academic methods and how to identify the distinctive social structures of different ethnic groups and how to recognize their individual systems. It was only later that I realized that what I had learned from him, i.e., emphasis on a holistic and systemic approach to human biology and social structures, was in fact part of Bronislaw Malinowski's functional theory. After these studies, I went to the Dayao Mountains and Kaixiangong Village to do fieldwork and then proceeded to the

Keynote speech at the Interim Congress of International Union of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences.

[1] Wu Wenzao (1901–1985), a well-known anthropologist, sociologist, and ethnologist.

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London School of Economics where I studied social anthropology under Malinowski and Raymond Firth. You probably already know about this part of my background.

Counting from the time I started formal studies under Shirokogoroff, I have now been involved in anthropology for nearly 70 years. My guiding academic principle over these decades, following Mr. Wu Wenzao's ideas, has been to incorporate anthropological study and research into a sociological framework and to link them closely. For a number of reasons, my work was interrupted, but overall, I have not deviated from this academic direction, that is, to apply the fundamental concepts and theories of anthropology to the study of changes in modern Chinese society. I firmly believe that a person's way of thinking is inevitably influenced by the society and culture of his/her environment, and so naturally my own mental outlook has been marked by the times I have lived in. This is what is meant when we say personal experience is closely bound up with the changes of the world around one.

I was born in a small town on the southeastern coast of China, into a very traditional Chinese intellectual family. This marked my early education. My father had passed the county-level imperial examination, and after the elimination of the entire examination system, he was sent to Japan to study pedagogy. Upon his return, he became one of the first intellectuals to advocate the "new learning" system, modeled on the Japanese, which in turn was copied from the West. I attended my mother's kindergarten, called a *mengyang yuan* at that time. This was one of the earliest models of modern preschool education. From there, I went on to attend primary school and middle school all the way to university and then to Great Britain, my first contacts with the West. In 1938, I received my doctorate from London University, bringing an end to my formal education. The second period of my life was spent in China during the years of great turmoil of the War Against Japanese Aggression (1937–1945) and then the civil war (1946–1949). The Japanese had occupied my hometown, so I went to Kunming in the hinterland where I became a teacher. This period lasted until 1949, with the success of the Chinese Revolution and the founding of the People's Republic of China. The second period of my academic life can be said to have started in 1980, exactly 20 years ago. This has been my mature period and I have been very productive. I am now in the later years of this period.

I have lived through all the dramatic transformations of Chinese society during the twentieth century. These can be summarized as two major transformations and three phases, which I call the "triple jump." The first major transformation was when China began to evolve from a traditional, agrarian society into an industrial one with the introduction of Western machine production, what most people call modernization. This has been the most important period for me, during which I carried out most of my research into China's modernization process. My focus has been on understanding how China has gone through its industrial revolution. Now, as I reach the end of my life, I have been fortunate to witness a second great transformation: the emergence of the information age. So China is moving from industrialization, or modernization, toward the information age. On a personal level, I was born in a traditional society and have been living through the process of modernization with the introduction of machines, and yet, before this process has been completed, a new age of information has begun with electronics as the new mode of

communication. This is happening the world over and it's still not absolutely clear how things are going to evolve. These technical and informational transformations have occurred so rapidly that China is encountering a number of problems. In some places, the first "jump" is still not over, while the second one is still ongoing, and yet the third "jump" has already begun. I am very glad to have experienced these dramatic transformations in our society, but their speed and scope are such that I'm not sure I understand them fully. After all, my energy is limited, so I can only make a start, and hope those who come after me will carry on. To understand my academic life and work, it is necessary to keep in mind this "triple jump."

All my research has been performed against the backdrop of social change in China. My initial fieldwork and research began in 1935, under the influence of my two professors Wu Wenzao and Shirokogoroff. My earliest studies centered on the Yao people, one of the ethnic minorities in China. From that time on, I have always combined sociology and anthropology. In the academic world, the study of minority groups is used to be considered the sole preserve of anthropology; in China, it was later incorporated into ethnic studies. Naturally there has always been a lot of debate over this academic categorization and nomenclature. For me, applying the field-study methods of anthropology to the study of Chinese society and culture is an extremely important academic direction. I have consistently employed this method, from my studies of the Yao people right up to my investigations into the growth of urban communities and their development. I say this here today to show that my life's work is related to and highly pertinent to the theme of our conference "Metropolitan ethnic cultures: maintenance and interaction." My work has gone from the study of ethnic peoples to that of the urban communities of Shanghai and Beijing, a shift that in itself closely mirrors the overall development of our society.

The first "jump" in Chinese society started from the agrarian life of the various minority groups living in many parts of the country. I grew up in a small town in Jiangsu province, which relied on agriculture. This place can trace its history back 7,000 years to when the Liangzhu culture first flourished here, and farming and household handicrafts had already appeared. Archaeological finds clearly show what village life was like then. This was the basis for our first "jump" and also shaped the nature of our agrarian society. Many different cultures existed in different parts of the land, even then forming the basis for multiculturalism. As they mixed and melded, they formed a whole with many parts, which is what I studied in my first period. My book *Social Organization of the Hualan Yao*[2] is representative of this period. I contrasted the Yao culture with the Han culture as represented by my hometown and showed how it was affected by Han culture.

During the second stage of my research of this period, I looked into how Chinese rural society, which started 7,000 years ago with the Liangzhu culture and has continued down the present, began its rapid entry into the industrial age. *Peasant Life in*

[2] Fei Xiaotong. Wang Tognhui. *Social Organization of the Hualan Yao* (in Chinese, *Hualan Yao de shehuizuzhi*《花篮瑶的社会组织》). Jiangsu: People's Press of Jiangsu Province, 1988.

China—A Field Study of Country Life in the Yangtze Valley[3] describes this stage. I examined the early shocks that new science, technologies, and machine production inflicted on a traditional culture and its social organization. These were in fact the first primitive forms of modernization. Then came *Three Villages in Yunnan*,[4] a very important work from this period, which described the differences between villages in the hinterland and those in coastal areas. Our earliest steps in modernization began in the eastern coastal regions and spread westward to the interior. *Peasant Life in China* describes how coastal communities first began to industrialize, while *Three Villages in Yunnan* examines much more primitive farming societies. I had returned from London at the end of 1938 to find my hometown occupied by the Japanese, so I went to Kunming where I began my teaching career. About 100 km from there, I located the village of Lucun, in a very different environment from Kaixiangong, and began to study it. I found that it had been very little affected by modern industry and commerce, there was no handicraft industry, and it relied almost exclusively on farming. I discovered a very different system of land ownership. This was the second stage in the first period of my career and lasted until 1949.

Starting from 1949, I began to work in ethnic studies. This was the first phase of my life after new China was founded. Huge changes occurred in Chinese society after the establishment of the new government, and one of the most important was the change in the relations between ethnic peoples and the relevant state policies. In order to achieve ethnic equality, the National People's Congress was set up, a political institution with the highest powers, in which all ethnic peoples had representatives. However, in the early days, we were not sure how many minority ethnicities there actually were, what they called themselves, and how numerous they were. So between 1950 and 1952, the central government sent out "visiting teams" to all the main administrative regions to meet with these groups, find out their ethnic names, and learn about the features of their language, history, social organization, and culture. Since I was an anthropologist, I went on two missions to southeastern and south-central regions. On behalf of the central government, I visited the different peoples in these areas. My field studies spanned a period of 2 years, during which I went deep into the mountainous villages of Guizhou and Guangxi provinces, talking to the people and observing their customs. Direct contact with so many different cultures has led me to believe that the concept of ethnic identity is a genuine and widespread phenomenon, it is a sense of "community" passed down through generations and provides a close sense of belonging.

On the basis of these investigations, new ethnic policies were drawn up and implemented, and I participated directly in these efforts. From an academic angle, this work was in fact an extension of my previous investigations, extensions to *Peasant Life in China* and *Three Villages in Yunnan.* From 1950 to 1957, the focus

[3] Fei Xiaotong. *Peasant Life in China—A Field Study of Country Life in the Yangtze Valley* (in Chinese, *Jiangcun jingji*, 《江村经济》). Beijing: Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press, 2010.

[4] Fei Xiaotong. Zhang Zhiyi. *Three Villages in Yunnan* (in Chinese, *Yunnan sancun*, 《云南三村》). Beijing: Social Sciences Academic Press, 2006.

of my research thus shifted from mainly Han rural society to the minority areas, which were much more complex and diverse.

For reasons you all know, my academic career came to a halt after 1957, and it was only 23 years later toward the end of the 1970s and early 1980s that I resumed my work. I consider the period from then until now my second academic career. This has been the period of greatest changes in Chinese society. After I resumed my scholarly activities, I decided to review everything I had done in ethnic studies over the decades, and in 1988, I gave the Tanner lecture at Hong Kong Chinese University entitled "The Chinese Nation—Diversity within Integration."

This is the important concept that I have developed after studying China's ethnicities in the context of the entire Chinese nation, how they formed and evolved, and the patterns of their development. I point out that the definition of "the Chinese nation" is the 1.1 billion people who live in a specific land area and who share a common sense of identity. "It includes the 50 plus diverse ethnicities, which nevertheless together form an integrated whole. They make up one nation on many different levels." The mainstream of this nation is composed of many scattered, autonomous ethnic units that have met, mixed, joined, and assimilated; there has also been fracturing and dissolution, so that peoples have come and gone, merged and separated, becoming indissolubly intertwined yet each retaining distinctive features within the greater whole.

This concept applies not only to the birth and evolution of the Chinese nation but also represents the summing up of all my research into Chinese society as a whole. The 56 ethnic groups and their communities are the units that make up this society, in which diverse parts combine to form an integrated nation. This is the relationship between diversity and integration.

In our modern times, anthropology has come to focus more and more on the most practical problems that societies and people face in their lives. Hence, its role is no longer merely to "recall and predict" or to "explain" but also to "participate in and innovate." I recall in 1981, when I received the Huxley Memorial Medal in Britain, I said in my speech that "anthropology must serve the public's interest." Throughout my academic career, I have consistently followed this principle of "putting knowledge to use." I believe that knowledge is an intellectual's "capital" and that it must be used. Knowledge is created by society, not thought up by the individual, and what comes from society should be returned to it to help it advance. "Putting knowledge to use" is part of Chinese tradition, and I have followed this throughout my work. This is not something I invented, but comes out of traditional Chinese thought. What I have tried to do is to absorb new knowledge and apply it in this traditional spirit. How well I have done is not for me to say. However, this is why throughout my career I have tried to combine my research closely with the lives of the people. In the Chinese context, by applying the field research methods of anthropology, it is possible to find solutions to many major issues that afflict us from the past, including rural development and economic and social growth. This is what I have been working on during the 20 years since the late 1970s when I resumed my research, and I will continue along this path.

The results of my research over this period are presented in *You Travel On and On*.[5] My health no longer allows me to go to places for long periods to observe and interview anymore. I rely on information provided by the local people and cadres and on interviews and investigations in villages and factories carried out by my accompanying assistants. I also organize various kinds of visits and listen to lectures to get some perceptual knowledge. This is second-hand information from places I once visited and observed in person and of course is not anthropological field study in the strictest sense. A distinguishing feature of my work is to combine second-hand materials and firsthand interviews to carry out comparative typology studies. By examining different types from the same time period, it is possible to observe the dynamics of a society and particularly how it has changed in the process of modernization and urbanization. In this period, I proposed the two issues of township enterprises and small town development.

Prior to the 1950s, my typology studies were limited primarily to villages, even though by the end of the 1940s, I had come to realize that research into rural communities should not be limited to villages alone, but must also take into account the towns that had frequent contact with them and that also inhibited them. However, because of the outbreak of civil war and later with the elimination of the academic field of sociology, my study of townships only really began in the 1980s. When I proposed "small towns, big issues" I was thinking about the future of the rural population. The growth of townships was closely linked to the appearance of township enterprises. Back in the 1930s, I had already proposed that the growth of rural communities depended on rural industrialization, that is, "grassroots" industries built on local social and cultural advantages, which would allow farmers to prosper. In fact, this only really began to happen after the 1980s. The birth and growth of township enterprises gave farmers many nonagricultural job opportunities and qualitatively changed their lives. I recall that in 1983 when this research was initiated, I proposed a five-word outline, type, level, growth, distribution, and development, as a starting point. On this basis I proposed the concept of the "economic model" in 1984. For me, an economic model is "a distinctive path of economic growth that is suited to a specific locality under specific historical conditions." This leads to the comparative study of different models, such as the Su'nan, the Wenzhou, and the Pearl River models. All are rooted in the society and culture of a specific region. I believe that any economic system is part of a specific culture, relying on its natural and human resources and possessing its own organizational structures and rationales. As conditions mature, a specific system will emerge that will naturally be supported by an ethical framework emanating from that culture and aligned with it. A number of colleagues from abroad, such as Sociology Professor Katuko Tsurumi of Japan, believe that my ideas are the source of "the theory of endogenous development."

These various models are all in the process of change. The first Su'nan model grew out of the people's communes when the brigade and work team industries became village enterprises. This was the first change. The second big change was

[5] Fei Xiaotong. *You Travel On and On* (in Chinese, *Xingxing chong xingxing*, 《行行重行行》). Gansu: Ningxia Press, 1989.

the Wenzhou small commodities/big market, one in which township industries were absorbed into the market economy. This was a transitional stage. The third stage is represented by the Pearl River model, which is still growing. Here foreign investment is being brought in to boost the ratio of advanced technology and science in their products and to spur economic growth. These three models are interconnected and have each evolved through internal processes. The Su'nan model is now also transforming into the Pearl River one.

During this period, my guiding principle was "act nationally." Starting in the 1980s, my attention was not only on the coastal areas but also on the development in those borderline zones where coastal regions adjoin the hinterland and particularly on how the minority peoples who live there could share in the prosperity. I proposed plans to set up multiethnic economic collaboration zones. Some are already being put in place, such as the northwest multiethnic zone on the upper and middle reaches of the Yellow River, the southwest six river basins ethnic zone, the Nanling Corridor ethnic zone, the Mount Wuling highland zone, and the Inner Mongolian joint farmer-herdsman zone. Through comprehensive research there, I have sought to combine ethnic studies with the realities of ethnic regional modernization. Development in these zones should emphasize adaptation to local conditions and highlight ethnic features.

Starting from the 1980s, my research focus can be said to have shifted from the coastal areas to borderline ones and then on into the hinterland, from the southeast to the northwest, and from villages and townships to the ethnic regions. We must realize that, because we are a multiethnic nation, the gap between the eastern and western regions also includes gaps between the ethnic groups. Strategies for the development of the western regions must not ignore ethnic factors, for these are distinctive cultural features formed through history and adapted to a people's concrete material and social conditions. Historically, different ethnic communities have met and mingled in these borderline regions, building economic and cultural ties, which over the centuries, have coalesced into a unique local regional culture. This is where mutually beneficial contact has made it possible for so many diverse cultures to coexist. My proposals for economic collaboration take this historical, cultural regional reality as their starting point.

In fact, my theories and methods have not really changed from the ones I studied in my early anthropology days. All I have done is apply them to the study of current changes in Chinese society and culture. Between 1990 and 1999, I published my writings in the *Works of Fei Xiaotong*[6] (14 volumes). This is a record of my experience and reflects how I have changed over the years.

The theme of this conference is well within the scope of my research. After all, my goal is to understand China, a multicultural integrated whole. I will not say any more about this, those who are interested can read what I have written. There has been a great deal of discussion after I proposed this idea. A multicultural integrated

[6] Fei Xiaotong. *Works of Fei Xiaotong* (14 Volumes) (in Chinese, *Fei Xiaotong wenji*,《费孝通文集》). Beijing: Qunyan Press, 1999.

whole is formed through a historical process, which includes modernization, industrialization, and urbanization of all ethnic groups.

When we talk about urban anthropology, we are focusing on the changes that have and are taking place within China's multicultural mainstream in the process of urbanization and industrialization. I propose examining these changes from two perspectives: one is how the various ethnic groups separately experience these changes; the other is the fact that Chinese cities are not mono-ethnic but multiethnic entities, where people must coexist to achieve these changes and how they do this.

According to the first perspective, we need to examine how people have changed their production from pure farming and handicrafts to mechanized methods. In this stage, the third leap (of the triple jump) has not happened yet, and our basic direction and theories are generally in line with the development process of all ethnic groups, the majority Han people included. Take my own research for example, where I have extended the scope and areas covered and looked at how different ethnic groups make this change toward modernization, each starting from different points, all very rich subjects for study.

The second perspective opens up another area of investigation: how do people from very different cultures live peacefully together in a city, within a single political economic organization, to achieve integration (diversity within integration)? This is not only a historical concept but also a current one.

There are two major issues here: development and peaceful coexistence.

Take development. We now talk about developing the western regions of China. Most ethnic minority peoples originated from and still live in these regions. Modernization there will naturally include them. The multiethnic nature of China will mean that this diversity must also be part of the study of urbanization, e.g., what role will ethnic traditions play in the growing cities and how will minority peoples adapt culturally to urban life. These are all new phenomena and issues. I believe that urban anthropology should include them. We can no longer follow the old ways in which we merely described the static state of local early culture, we must also examine its transformations. In the future, cultural change should become the main theme of anthropological studies. This reminds me of my teacher, Professor Malinowski. In 1998, at the centenary anniversary celebrations for Peking University, a series of academic lectures under the general theme of "21st Century: Cultural Awareness and Cross-cultural Communication" was organized. I presented a paper entitled "On Reading *The Dynamics of Culture Change*,[7] " in which I discussed my thoughts on reading this posthumous work by Professor Malinowski. In its early days, anthropology examined closed, primitive societies and compared them. This was Malinowski's main research at that time. He was also the founder of scientific ethnography. In his early years, he advocated the study of closed communities so as to identify their cultural functions. By the end of the 1930s, he had completed his monumental works on the indigenous peoples of the Western Pacific Islands. Subsequently, he visited the colonies in eastern and southern Africa and

[7] Malinowski, Bronislaw. *The Dynamics of Culture Change*. Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1945.

saw a continent in the throes of huge change. He witnessed the dynamic interaction between local and outside colonial cultures, and this led him to the belief that any science that studies human society and culture must keep pace with the changing times. He proposed that "culture change" should become the new focus of modern anthropology. His work *The Dynamics of Culture Change* was written at the end of the 1930s and at the beginning of the 1940s. It was published by Yale University Press in 1945, 3 years after he died. He foresaw that this concept would apply to all nations, thus pointing us in a new direction. It is up to our generation of anthropologists and the next to build on his ideas and construct a modern anthropology.

Second, the peaceful coexistence of many ethnicities living together in the common political and economic framework of an urban environment in which they continue to develop. If this cannot be done peacefully, there will be many problems and even conflicts. In fact this has already occurred. The dominant Western cultures of Europe and the United States have not been able to resolve this issue, and it has come to the fore in recent years. Many local wars have broken out, the most prominent being the one in Kosovo. Such conflicts continue to occur. From an anthropological perspective, it's obvious that the huge social changes after World War II, coupled with the advancement in science and communication, mean that people no longer live in isolated, primitive societies anymore. The distance between them is shrinking. And yet, just at a time when human civilization must find some kind of a consensus, our existence is threatened by nuclear weapons, population explosion, shortages of food and resources, ethnic conflicts, and regional wars. Particularly since the end of the Cold War, previously hidden but unresolved ethnic and religious conflicts have become increasingly violent. Since 1988, all the wars, except Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, have been caused by internal ethnic tensions. Researchers have pointed out that between 1949 and the early 1990s, the number of people killed and wounded in ethnic conflicts is about 1.69 million, many times more than the casualties in wars between nations. These ethnic conflicts broke out when the Soviet Union disintegrated and there were disputes over national sovereignty and independence; in Africa there has been war in the Sudan and Somalia; in Asia violence in Burma and Sri Lanka; and the war in the Yugoslavia between Croatia, Serbia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, and Kosovo. From this perspective, human society is in a "crisis of civilization."

We are all aware of the inherent threats these conflicts pose. Many scholars from different disciplines are searching for their root causes and hoping to find solutions. Scientific anthropology is also examining the issues of development, building on its traditional methods and studies, expanding the scope of its research, seeking solutions by adopting comparative social and cultural perspectives, and guiding us to adapt to present and future changes.

It looks as if existing Western academic theories and thinking are unable to resolve these issues. However, Chinese traditional practices and current ethnic policies are all in line with the logic of peaceful coexistence. We already have a direction and we have already advanced along it. We have 50 years of experience of implementing our ethnic policy. I hope our Chinese anthropologists turn their attention to these matters and examine them from a theoretical perspective.

The twenty-first century is here, and we are hastily trying to find a common vision for it. The task we face today is: how can different countries, nationalities, religions, and cultures coexist peacefully to build a common future for mankind?

Carved on the main hall of the Confucius Temple are the characters "中和位育" (*zhonghe weiyu*). They represent the essence of Confucian thought and are a fundamental value for us Chinese. *Zhonghe* is expressed by a cultural tolerance and sharing (see more detailed discussion in Chapter 1, Part III). At my 80th birthday party held in Tokyo 11 years ago, I looked to the future of anthropology and proposed that it should contribute to civilization by helping "each to appreciate its own best, appreciate the best of others, appreciate the best together, to build greater harmony for all." This means anthropology should explore the capacity for cultural self-awareness, the possibility of mutual understanding and tolerance, and the common ideals of cultural diversity to search for a way toward "Great Harmony under Heaven." In fact, if we look back into our history, we find that this is an expression of "living in harmony but valuing differences" which is a constant theme throughout our traditional experience.

The Chinese have always pursued an ideal state of "oneness between Nature and Man," and the social norm to achieve this oneness is harmony. "Harmony" is the starting point for all social relationships and structures within society. By applying this value to specific relationships between different ethnicities, the concept of "living in harmony but valuing differences" is born. The Western concept toward ethnicity is very different, the result of different historical evolution and experiences. Actually this traditional perspective is another way of expressing my own idea of diversity within integration. It is essential to recognize "difference," but also to strive for "harmony," or else conflict will ensue. Emphasizing only "difference" without "harmony" results in destruction. "Living in harmony but valuing differences" is a condition for our common survival, it's the only way we can build a truly multicultural world.

We are now living in an era of globalization, which originated in the West. However, as non-Western nations accept this globalization, they should also respond to it in light of their own cultures. A widespread notion used to be that, as ethnic minorities migrate to urban areas as a result of globalization, they would lose the individuality of their cultures and sense of identity. In fact this has not happened. Globalization and local cultures respond to each other following certain logic. This brings to mind something I have frequently mentioned in different places, and that is the issue of "cultural self-awareness." The times require that members of a specific culture have a clear understanding of it, how it developed in the past and how it may develop in the future. In one sense, encouraging cultural self-awareness is an expression of "living in harmony but valuing differences."

Today, we are gathered here in China, a country with an ancient history and populated by one quarter of humanity, composed of many different ethnic peoples, to discuss "Metropolitan ethnic cultures: maintenance and interaction." I believe this has great historical significance. I also believe that this Chinese concept of "living in harmony but valuing differences" will inject new meaning into this theme.

July 28, 2000

Chapter 3
Thoughts on a "Good Society"

I wish to thank the "Indira Gandhi International Forum" for giving me this opportunity to speak to such a distinguished group of scholars about my ideas on the topic of a "good society." I very much look forward to your comments.

I think it is highly significant for the future development of mankind that, as the twentieth century draws to a close and the twenty-first century is about to begin, the topic of "re-interpreting the 'good society'" is once again on the table for discussion by scholars from different cultural backgrounds. I am honored to be part of this exchange.

As a Chinese scholar trained in anthropology, I am not qualified to explore how this concept should be understood in the future from a philosophical or ethical perspective. I can only approach it from a factual historical one, by looking back over how past peoples and groups with different cultures have defined a "good society," how it took shape, evolved, and affected their communities. I will also present some initial speculations about how this concept might evolve as a global society emerges in the future.

It is a fact that, from the time human beings first clustered together in communities, the desire for a "good society" has been an inseparable part of their communal life. It is expressed through myths and legends, in religion, generational strictures, philosophy, and learning. This deep desire informs a set of values and beliefs essential to human social consciousness. Individuals' aspirations are guided by it, and the social rules that govern interpersonal relations within the group are molded by it. A "good society" is a combination of individual subjective consciousness and the social laws and rules of the community.

What constitutes a "good society" is distilled from the experiences of the group, as it struggles over time to survive and grow under specific objective conditions. Gradually shaped by the practice of many generations, the concept becomes an

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integral part of the group's history. Different groups will imbue the term with distinct content, though in each there is an affirmation of common identity and of mutual exhortation. "Each confirms its own correctness, each appreciates its own best." A vision of a "good society" is the bedrock of social behavior and underlies the value system, which supports communal social life. All human societies possess such an ideal, but the substance may vary from group to group, because it has been shaped by different historical realities.

In a state of autarkic isolation, it was possible for unrelated human groups to be assured of their own correctness, appreciate only themselves, and have nothing to do with others. However, in the course of human development, this kind of isolation has long since disappeared. Inevitably, peoples have come into contact, intermingled, and exchanged. People have had to learn not only how to coexist within their own group but also increasingly with other groups. Common values and beliefs bring individuals together, but it is far more complicated and difficult for different groups to find common values and ideas that allow them to collaborate and mix. Throughout history though, people from different belief systems have frequently communicated and worked together. After all, progress can only be achieved through more contact and cooperation, yet tension and even conflicts are also unavoidable. If a way of life or conditions for survival are threatened and a conflict occurs, both sides will call upon their own values and beliefs to bring their group together and will condemn the values of the other as heresy in order to build resistance to the external adversary. That's how ideological differences are dragged into group antagonisms, which sometimes degenerate into open military confrontation. There has been no lack of examples in the past in which values and beliefs have been used as pretexts for war. This continues to the present day and is one of the dangers we face.

Here, a brief review of contemporary history might be useful. Some 500 years ago, the Spaniard Christopher Columbus discovered the "New World" which no European had set foot on before. This not only marked the beginning of new geographical knowledge for Europe but also the start of a new historical era for both Europe and the world. The developments of modern science, technology, and economy created by the Renaissance and the Reformation in Europe succeeded in linking all the major continents on the planet, so that countless peoples scattered throughout them could no longer live in isolation, each in their own way. And yet, in these 500 years, no one has been able to find a way to build a peaceful order so that a "good society" acceptable to all could be constructed. On the contrary, these 500 years have been fraught with piracy at sea, military aggression, pillage of natural resources, the growth of colonies and spheres of influence, the bullying of the weak by the strong, and hegemons struggling for supremacy, resulting in endless wars. It's true that science and technology have advanced so that we can now exploit natural resources more efficiently, but they have also created the weapons with which we could destroy ourselves completely. This situation that I have briefly described has aroused great perplexity and concern among many people including you, my colleagues here today.

I was born in the early years of the twentieth century. From World War I, which started a few years after my birth, down to the present time, I can say the 80 years of my life have been lived in the shadow of innumerable wars large and small. World War II inflicted disasters on mankind, and my generation remembers them clearly. This has made me wonder if worldwide wars are not perhaps the distinctive feature of the twentieth century. Before this era, wars between human populations were quite common, but none of them spread to include the whole world. Here we are at the close of this century, and I am sure that every one of us clearly realizes that if the practices of the twentieth century are continued into the twenty-first and another world war breaks out, it will be the end of human civilization, maybe of the human race itself. So how can mankind find a new road to peaceful existence in this new century? I believe this is the matter of common concern that brings us here to this forum on "re-interpreting the 'good society'," held to commemorate Mrs. Gandhi.

I have never believed that differences in values and belief systems should be a reason for conflicts and wars. A comparison of the different ideals of a "good society" shows that all peoples aspire to peace and prosperity. These two fundamentals can only be achieved through peaceful collaboration. There really is no reason for a life and death struggle. Consequently, I have come to believe that all these conflicts throughout history, whether ideological, religious, ethnic, or the recently ended "Cold War," are essentially over purely material interests. Irreconcilable ideological antagonisms are used as pretexts and disguises for struggles over material interests.

I concede that ideological variances used as excuses and cover for other substantive differences can then escalate into open antagonism. There is also another common human mentality at work here, and that is when people who only "appreciate their own best" come in contact with others, they end up believing that they alone are "best"; in other words, they develop a superiority complex which excludes all who do not share their values. This kind of self-righteousness was recorded in ancient Chinese books as "if he be not of our kin, he is sure to have a different mind." This kind of mentality will inevitably lead to imposing one's values on others and arousing antagonism. Confucius was strongly opposed to this kind of exclusiveness, claiming that "there being instruction, there will be no distinction of classes" and that each should "not to do to others as you would not wish done to yourself." Values and belief systems can be shaped by education, but not imposed.

Let us think back to the Cold War that ended not long ago. It has usually been regarded as a time of ideological confrontation. Now that things have passed, informed people realize that in fact the Cold War was a struggle for spheres of influence between two hegemonic powers. There was no open war, and the West succeeded in overcoming the East, so that overnight, the Cold War ended. Had this really been a struggle between ideologies, things would not have changed so fast, because it takes a long time for people's values and beliefs to change.

Now look at how China dealt with the return of Hong Kong under the principle of "one country, two systems." This experience positively demonstrates that different social systems with their ideologies can coexist peacefully within a single politi-

cal framework, within a single sovereign country, and by cooperating and complementing each other can produce a common prosperity. By separating the ideological from the economic and political, it is possible to seek common ground while accepting differences.

We need a deeper understanding of the events that have taken place in the last dozen or so years of the twentieth century. Can we now say that it is possible for all groups large and small to preserve their own value systems and still establish peaceful, mutually beneficial economic and political relations with others, as long as everyone refrains from self-righteousness and is tolerant of different values and beliefs? If it is too soon for such a conscious coming together, it should nevertheless still be possible to build on common values while accepting differences, in preparation for the greater world harmony of the future.

One of the first lessons of anthropology is to place oneself in the shoes of a member of a group to fully understand how that group really lives. Similarly, we must learn to "appreciate the best of others" in the same way we appreciate and understand our own value system. This does not mean we have to adopt theirs as our own, only that we should be tolerant of the differences. To overcome exclusiveness requires an acceptance of diversity. In the economic sense, this means not obstructing mutually beneficial competition, refraining from short-term unilateral protectionism, and maintaining mutual openness and equal opportunities. In the political sense, this means first of all not interfering in the internal affairs of sovereign states, not using force on others, adopting dialogue instead of confrontation, and resolving conflicts between nations through peaceful consultation. Maybe this is what we should aspire to in the twenty-first century, when there will already be very close political and economic ties, yet different peoples will still not have come together psychologically. "Appreciating one's own best" does not preclude "appreciating the best of others." By raising our level of awareness, we can establish closer collaboration on the principle of finding common ground while accepting differences.

These basic principles governing relations between peoples are a necessary preparation for the greater prosperity of the global village and also a way of preventing disastrous setbacks in which mankind returns to an uncivilized state or loses control.

As an anthropologist, I have faith in human aspirations. Social consciousness is constantly changing and evolving, and we are forever reaching for something better. After millions of years of evolution, scattered isolated individuals have come together in groups, which can today aspire to a global society where the whole of mankind will work and grow together. In China, the ancients called this Great Harmony, under which all could enjoy a common order and morality. At present, it is difficult for us to say how or when this will happen, but as long as we continue to search and explore, this "good society" will one day appear on our planet.

These are some of my ideas that I have rather brashly presented to you. I very much look forward to your comments.

July 14, 1993

Chapter 4
"Appreciate the Best Together" and Human Civilization

4.1 The Issue of Civilization

The issue of relations between different civilizations in this era of globalization is nothing new. The term "globalization" so often used today can be traced back to the nineteenth century when the West (principally Great Britain) dominated the planet, bringing together many different cultures to meet and intermingle. Study into this broad trend also began in the nineteenth century, for example, Karl Marx took note of worldwide capitalist expansion and the process of early accumulation. The issue has also consistently been an important subject of research for sociology, anthropology, and ethnic studies.

The study of globalization, civilization, and culture is now no longer purely for the sake of knowledge, but has become a discipline that is called upon to help resolve the serious problems confronting mankind. As contacts and tensions between nations, peoples, and religions increase, the conflicts caused by globalization are posing many challenges, drawing responses from international thinkers and academia alike. My own recent critiques of such theories as "Man against Nature" and the "clash of civilizations" are a commentary on some of these issues.

At this time, there is no single set of ideas or ideology that can clearly, fully, and persuasively resolve all the questions about how different cultures should live together. All states, whether the economically advanced "developed countries" or the majority of "developing countries," are facing this same serious challenge, so it is not limited to just one nation, one people, or one civilization, but is common to all. One of the features of globalization is that "problems" also become global.

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4.2 A Need of the Times

For the last two or three centuries, Western thinking has dominated world academic circles, but now, in the face of globalization, certain of its fundamentals appear to have very strong limitations, so that as solutions are found, new tensions emerge. For example, over the last century, as powerful Western culture has spread, "Eurocentrism" has taken hold; "Western supremacy," "colonialism," "ultranationalism," and "racism" were the catalysts for two world wars in the twentieth century and are still an important source of many international problems. Up until the present day, this "Western-centric" mentality is still causing many clashes of extremism and the use of violence to counterviolence.

This is why I believe that if we are to better understand today's issues and find ways to manage the relations between civilizations and globalization, then we must go beyond our present ways of thinking to reach a higher level of understanding of both our own and others' cultures. Only when communities, peoples, nations, and different civilizations arrive at some kind of common understanding will there be relative peace and harmony. This is the unavoidable challenge as globalization proceeds.

Serious examination of these matters inevitably involves culture, civilization, ethnicities, and human nature, as well as higher issues of epistemology and methodology. For example, when studying cultural exchange, the definition of culture becomes important; when looking into the basis and distinctive features of civilizations, the fundamental issues of "being human" and "humanity" are unavoidable. Research in many of the social sciences can give us insights and new directions for thought, e.g., anthropology's perspective on culture and tradition, sociology's theories of social group structures, and ethnic studies' explanations of the nature of ethnicity.

I raise these issues not because I have any answers or conclusions, but because I hope that, as we delve deeper, we will broaden and expand our vision, that we will go beyond the customary and common ways of looking at things, and that we will "step outside the box." Human civilization is a huge issue spread over time; our thinking must adopt a wide historical and all-inclusive perspective, in which we draw upon the wisdom of all mankind and upon the strengths of multi- and cross-disciplinary research.

Whenever mankind enters a historical turning point, the so-called sages will appear. These are people whose wisdom, vision and breadth of thinking, and humanism conform to the needs of the time. I often compare the present world situation to a "new Warring States" Period (475–221 BC) which, like the one in ancient China, demands the emergence of a thinker like Confucius. I can already hear the call of the times. Of course, today's sages will probably not come from one single civilization or be embodied in one person, but will be the combined essence of many cultures, of all mankind.

Over the past few years, whenever the topic of globalization comes up, I like to present the concept of "harmony within diversity." This is an ideal, and it will not be

easy for all the civilizations, nations, and ethnicities to accept and put into practice. We have a long, hard way to go.

I have also proposed "cultural self-awareness." What do I mean by this? Simply put, it means that every civilization should reflect hard on its own culture so as to acquire a strong self-knowledge. This should make people more rational and avoid senseless, impulsive, and blind behavior.

Later, I went one step further and proposed "each appreciates its own best, appreciates the best in others, all appreciate the best together for the greater harmony of all." This sentence embodies my ideal for the future and also points out the way to attain it. "Appreciating the best together" includes not only one's attitude toward oneself but also appreciation and respect for others, and if we could really achieve this, there would be harmony between different cultures and nations and thus lasting "harmony within diversity."

4.3 Empirical Studies

The study of civilization and culture can be approached from different perspectives and employ different methods, which should complement and support each other. As a student of society who has done a great deal of field research, I would like to take this opportunity to comment on and describe some of the methods I have used in examining the relationship between globalization and culture.

My career as a researcher began about 70 years ago in the Dayao Mountains of Guangxi province. My fieldwork using anthropological and ethnic studies methods ("combining theory with practice" in today's terms) had a decisive and lasting influence on all my subsequent research and has remained the basis for all my work.

I raise this issue today because I wish to remind everyone that we must not forget to expand out research methods as we study globalization and culture. All the new problems and phenomena in the world today are the result of contacts, clashes between, and interpenetration of different cultures, and there are no ready-made answers or solutions. This means that following previous rationales and using former methods are no longer sufficient. We must go beyond old stereotypes and judgments, we must find out about the real social life of people in a specific culture, and on this basis alone (not some preconceived ideology), we must build a common ideal that will be accepted across civilizations. The difficulty in this kind of research is that the researcher must leave behind all previous prejudices and must step out of the thought patterns of his/her own culture to willingly and consciously observe and understand the culture of another ethnicity. This kind of intercultural exchange and communication will permit the construction of a new and wider system of knowledge.

Why is it imperative to start from real-life investigations? Because human society is complex, varied, evolving, and creative. It far surpasses what a researcher from a single cultural background, with only limited knowledge and experience, can either imagine or accept. This is why the researcher must enter into the lives of "others"

to observe and study. In one sense, this methodology is a test of the researcher's own attitude, whether he is prepared to truly understand and accept the culture and civilization of "the other." This frame of mind is critical to cultural exchange today. The willingness to go deeply into an "alien" culture, to learn "the other's" language and traditions, and to stand in "the other's" shoes to see the world through the "other's" eyes is itself an expression of respect and openness toward the "alien" culture. Any kind of exchange or communication is impossible without this basic attitude of equality.

Throughout my academic career, I have tried to follow the fieldwork method. When my "second academic life" began, I was already in my 70s and naturally I can no longer, as in my youth, go out to communities and stay for long periods to observe and study social phenomena. However, each year I assign one third of my time to visiting many places for on-site investigations, and I have learned a great deal.

4.4 Attitudes and Values

In the history of learning, this positivist view of fieldwork was proposed in the early twentieth century by Malinowski, who was my advisor when I studied in Great Britain. From 1914 to 1918, Malinowski lived on the Trobriand Islands, joining in and observing the life of the native people. Out of this experience, he developed a practical research methodology and laid the foundations for the functional theory of anthropology. His contribution was not only academic but even more one of humanist values. Prior to him, Western academia was dominated by Western-centered theories of social evolution that considered the people of the colonies to be on a qualitatively lower level than the white race, "less civilized" and "savage." However, Malinowski urged anthropologists to go to study the primitive societies of the so-called other races and lesser humans and to live with them to observe and experience how their societies functioned. Malinowski gave back to these "outsiders" their status and dignity as human beings.

Before Malinowski proposed and taught his ideas about fieldwork, even major anthropologists like Frazer relied on reading travel books, notes, and other documents for their research. This use of indirect observations, indirect records, and multiple authors' accounts easily resulted in erroneous explanations and conclusions due to inconsistencies, inaccuracies, and varying perspectives. Direct fieldwork allowed the researcher to become a participant observer in the life of a society, to take anthropology "out of the study" and produce work that surpassed anything that had been done before.

Cross-cultural participant observation requires an attitude that transcends cultural biases. Generally, it is quite natural for a person from a specific cultural background to have misunderstandings, distortions, and prejudices of the "other's" culture because of unfamiliarity with it. However, a researcher needs a higher level of understanding and empathy, as well as the ability to overcome these biases. I particularly emphasize "empathy" which is especially important in intercultural

studies. It enables the researcher to totally immerse himself in the subjects' lives, to think like them, to see the world from their perspective, and yet at the same time to remain clearheaded and detached enough to observe all that is going on. This ability to "go in and come out" is the way to genuinely experience "cross-culture." I believe that the attitude of the researcher is the most important element in discussions on globalization and civilizations, not research methodology or other technical issues.

Actually, our common saying "always think of others as well as yourself" is just a way of describing this specific mentality essential for intercultural studies. It is a traditional Chinese expression of an important cultural rule of social interaction. There are many other popular "rules" often quoted by people. I believe they represent valuable experience and wisdom accumulated over the long history of the Chinese nation, as it has built diversity within integration by bringing together the different cultures and traditions of its many peoples. I hope this experience and wisdom can help our social science researchers.

Cultivating such a positive attitude toward intercultural communication should be obligatory for all those who work in this field, and we should require all students of social sciences to develop it through their studies. If we can extend this kind of awareness to the broader public through education, we can encourage better communication, exchanges, and understanding between ordinary people from different cultures. Then, there is hope that tensions, prejudices, conflicts, hostilities, and violence between ethnicities and cultures today may be overcome and eventually eliminated.

4.5 Cultural Blending

The domination of Western culture over the last few centuries encouraged an overweening arrogance among certain social forces in these societies, resulting in many Eurocentric ideologies such as colonialism, racism, ultranationalism, chauvinism, single-evolutionary process, etc. At the same time, however, there were challenges from scholars like Malinowski, who reexamined and attacked these ideas. This kind of reexamination can be called a manifestation of "cultural self-awareness." To this day, there are great theoretical controversies and heated debates within Western societies and academic schools of thought. For their part, non-Western civilizations have experienced centuries of colonialism, world wars, the Cold War, and national liberation movements, which have all had complex effects on the thinking and psychology of their people. Many social trends have emerged, some of them opposed to "Western supremacy" and even violently resistant to it. This has been called a "clash of civilizations" and it is already affecting the world. "Terrorism" and the "war on terror" are some of the manifestations of this "clash."

Over the centuries, dominant Western culture has spread to all civilizations, and as the world has drawn closer over time, this process has accelerated. However, cultural exchange goes both ways, and just as Western culture has spread outward, so it has also absorbed a great deal from others. This kind of cultural blending is

happening all the time. "Alien cultures" are "digested" and "transformed" to become new elements reflected in the religion, politics, and ideology of the host culture. We can truly say that all civilizations have interpenetrated and blended. Today none are the so-called "pure" traditional cultures described in historical documents or the classic works of the past. That's why we must change our former abstract, conceptualized, and rigid ways of thinking and replace them with a new dynamic, holistic, multifaceted vision when examining intercultural and inter-civilization relations.

4.6 Inspiration from Chinese Culture

As a non-Western culture, China has suffered from many years of colonial and imperialist oppression. Generations of Chinese have fought and sacrificed for national salvation, succeeding in the end to safeguard sovereignty and independence. Decades of humiliation and unrelenting resistance followed now by a new sense of dignity on the world stage have all had a profound influence on how the Chinese nation regards globalization. As China's overall national strength and international standing improve, we must pay particular attention to reexamining ourselves and deepening our "cultural self-awareness" so that we have a clearheaded understanding of our situation and place ourselves correctly in the world.

"Cultural self-awareness" means reflecting on one's own and others' civilizations. Examining oneself can often help to understand relations with others, since all cultures are an amalgam of many different ethnic traditions. Though the ancient myths and legends of different communities all claim their cultural "purity," serious scientific research reveals that all civilizations without exception are in fact full of diversity existing within an integrated structural whole. Toward the end of the 1980s, I proposed, my idea formed after years of research, that the Chinese nation is a configuration of "diversity within integration." This was my attempt to describe the process by which the Chinese nation became an entity made up of 56 different ethnicities.

This kind of configuration can give us some insights as we examine globalization and intercultural relations. We know that the ancient Chinese considered "the Middle Kingdom" (中国) to be "all under Heaven" and looked upon it as "a world" (世界). So when we say "The empire, long divided, must unite; long united, must divide. Thus it has ever been," we do not mean the division or unity of the nation state as modern Westerners understand it (e.g., North and South Korea, East and West Germany) but that "a world" will break up and then recombine into a "greater whole" again. All through the millennia of Chinese history, there have been innumerable "divisions" and "unities," endless disputes and struggles, yet the trend from "diversity" toward "integration" has been the main underlying one. Even under "integration," the central rulers always allowed certain regions, social classes, or trades to maintain their distinct political, religious, or economic identities. What were the internal mechanisms, cultural factors, and mentalities that allowed such a dispersed, multicentered configuration to exist in ancient China? What are the strengths and weaknesses of such a state of "unity in diversity"? Which aspects of traditional Chinese culture played a part, and what were their specific effects? What

kind of humanist values and attitudes of the ancient Chinese allowed them to be tolerant of and accept so many different cultures and peoples, so that a nation characterized by "diversity within integration" was possible? These are questions that we must ponder and study.

In the course of a long history of "divisions and unities," formerly isolated and scattered ethnic communities met and mingled, so that while preserving their distinctive features, they also became part of the whole. That's why throughout Chinese civilization, we can observe a dialectical relationship between the part and the whole. For example, the Warring States Period produced many thinkers representing different schools of thought. And yet, in the end, only Confucianism took hold and "integrated" the whole. So what is it in Confucianism that gave it this ability to combine different peoples, regions, and cultures into a "diverse whole"? Another related question: while many ethnic communities assimilated into the Han mainstream, what made it possible for the culture of one group to become the "shared" culture of all? We know that getting different religions to "coexist peacefully" is a tricky and complex business, but there are successful examples in Chinese history. The Jewish experience in China is one. There is a common perception that the Jewish people are strongly religious; however, within the relative tolerance of traditional Chinese culture, the Jews gradually assimilated into society, so there was no increased religious fervor or violent confrontation as happened in the West with the persecution of the Jews. In the Liao (907–1125), Jin (1115–1234), Yuan (1206–1368), and Qing (1616–1911) dynasties, the rulers all took special administrative measures that adjusted to or followed the traditions, customs, and beliefs of different ethnic communities inhabiting different parts of the country, and yet all this "compliance" was able to come together within the framework of a higher concept of "one nation."

These examples all demonstrate that a mature system and model of mediation already exist within the structures and mechanisms of Chinese civilization. They have taken shape over centuries, formed by the practical experiences of many generations who experimented, continuously built upon, and refined them. The system and model embody the great political wisdom of past administrators and the sophistication and depth of Chinese culture. Up until the present day, the concepts behind "regional autonomy for minorities" and "one country, two systems" are deeply rooted in traditional Chinese culture.

Our civilization has a long, rich history, and we have much experience of contacts with "alien" cultures. As China integrates more with the rest of the world, I believe we will contribute to building relations between different cultures in this age of globalization.

4.7 The Humanist Nature of Cross-Cultural Studies

The way different cultures interact is often seen the contest of different countries and nations in terms of the political, military and overall strength, rather like an analysis of mechanical forces. While there is some truth to this kind of comparison,

it remains incomplete, because culture and civilization above all involve "human beings," so understanding the issues must start from them.

Culture and civilization are abstract concepts, and their interactions cannot be seen in the same light as relations between distinct social entities such as groups or organizations. However, when problems between cultures arise, there is a tendency to unconsciously treat them as if they were such concrete entities. We must understand that culture and civilization are characterized by emotion, mental attitudes, habits, and beliefs, all of which are nonrational; that's why cultural interactions cannot be managed simply by using straightforward logic, argument, or rationality. We have all had the experience of being unable to use reason in the face of emotions, psychological mind-sets, and habits. That's why such complex and delicate interactions call for a special set of principles and methods that should focus on "cultural empathy" and "subject experience." This implies a system that centers on "the human being" and takes into account history, culture, traditions, customs, literature, and art.

In cross-cultural research, it is extremely important to understand the biological, cultural, and social nature of "human beings," their ways of thinking, ideology, knowledge, and experience, as well as the complex, subtle, and shifting relations between the individual and the group. It's important because all of the above can be communicated and passed down to other members of the group, to become shared spiritual and mental assets, and thus "preserved" to the point of becoming a "lasting" part of "culture." In the same way, people of different cultures have communicated and inherited things from other civilizations.

Seen from a wider perspective, the very diversity of human civilizations is the best guarantee for each culture to exist and survive "forever." It is only when a specific culture blends with a richer and more varied world civilization that it is able to sustain its own existence. The statement "national culture belongs to world culture" is quite true. And by turning the expression around, "only with world culture is there national culture," there will be the right environment for national cultures to survive and grow. That's why any kind of cultural superiority, complacency, or contempt for others will lead to decline. If the civilizations of the world are to live and thrive together, there must be contact, understanding, sharing, and blending. This applies to both "strong" and "weak" cultures alike.

The study of culture and civilization inevitably involves examining different value systems and beliefs, and these may very easily arouse the emotions and challenge the ways of thinking of the investigator. This can become a serious barrier to research. All of us social scientists who have studied specific populations, ethnic groups, and religions have encountered these problems, so it is essential to develop the ability to transcend one's own accustomed ways of thinking. We do not advocate using the ideology or value system of any one culture to resolve problems between cultures, because using the "criteria" of one culture to evaluate another will in fact become a value judgment of "good" or "bad," no matter how well intentioned. People from differing cultural backgrounds do not think the same way, so they will see the same thing quite differently, and thus what might have originally been a question of "correct" or "incorrect" can very easily become a judgment of "good"

or "bad." I believe that, no matter what the motive, forcing people to accept values alien to it is oppressive and insulting.

When cultures interact, very often "content" takes second place to "form." By "form" I do not mean scientism's form that is external, superficial, and can be disregarded, but instead the anthropological one of "ritual," "symbol," or "meaning." These play a vital role in all cultures and civilizations and can be critical for their survival. Conflicts between cultures cannot be explained in purely economic or utilitarian terms. We have in China the ancient stories of "refusing to eat the grain of the tyrant," and "Su Wu from the Han[1] court became a shepherd rather than bow to the Hun" which all clearly show that cultural interaction is not a simple business deal and that a nation or a culture cannot be bought over with material advantages or coerced into submission.

There are people today who frequently, either deliberately or unconsciously, link cultural issues directly with state or national interests. This has the effect of magnifying and even exacerbating misunderstandings and tensions between cultures. These people disguise "national interests" under the cloak of culture and civilization and make "righteous" claims about defending "culture" when in reality protecting specific national interests. Of course, broadly speaking, cultural values are also a part of "interests," but this kind of simplistic equivalence is superficial, irrational, inaccurate, and irresponsible. It would be like saying that US national interests are those of Christian culture or that China's national interests are equivalent to Confucian culture.

We believe that where national interests are concerned, they should be dealt with on a case-by-case basis, like a business agreement where consensus is reached through reasoned negotiation. Elevating such matters to the level of culture or civilization only injects emotion and other irrational elements into the mix.

No state should claim that it is the sole representative and embodiment of a civilization or that it is its defender. Political groups should not hijack culture to serve populist political movements or interests. Including culture into "national interests," together with economic and political objectives, greatly distorts the essence of intercultural relationships and has nefarious consequences.

4.8 Appreciate the Best Together

History and the present all show us that relations between cultures require first and foremost that all parties maintain a calm and modest attitude, what the ancient Chinese called "the exemplary person."

A number of years ago, I proposed "each appreciates its own best, appreciates the best of others, all appreciate the best together to build greater harmony for all." This is my aspiration, but there is a long way to go and it will be very difficult. Just take "each appreciates its own best, appreciates the best of others," which requires

[1] The Han dynasty spans from 206 BC to 220 AD.

that people of all cultures not only appreciate their own traditions but also genuinely admire those of an alien culture and are able to refrain from judging another culture as "inferior" or deciding what is "worthy" or not.

It is very hard to attain this state of mind. Just look at many of the developing countries that have suffered from the humiliations of Western colonialism. The psychology of their peoples has been twisted by this experience, which can produce two opposite reactions: one of complete self-denigration and worship of all things Western and the other total rejection, exclusion, and even hatred of the West. This latter seems to have developed into a social trend these days. For their part, the powerful developed civilizations very easily become arrogant and fond of "preaching" about the superiority of their cultures, which results in a kind of blindness to the rest of the world, and a narrow perspective, like a frog sitting at the bottom of a well. In China, we have experienced both of these extremes. I hope very much that Chinese academia can rid itself of blind worship of the West and self-belittlement, as well as avoid arrogance and exclusionism.

Over the millennia, Chinese civilization has accumulated the wisdom and valuable experience of countless forebears. I think that today, we urgently need to study, investigate, and draw lessons from this past. In an age of "information explosion" when all sorts of "alien cultures" are pouring into our country, we need to think carefully about what to do. Neither accepting indiscriminately nor blindly rejecting is good option. We should "appreciate" them in a rational, calm, thoughtful, and unemotional way. After all, no civilization is perfect; all have strengths and weaknesses, so we should be both "understanding" and "selective" toward them. That's what I mean by "each appreciates its own best, appreciates the best of others, all appreciate the best together, to build greater harmony for all." We've had examples of this in our history. During the Tang dynasty (618–907), the country was thriving, the economy was prosperous, and the culture flourished. Our neighbor Japan took note and sent people over to learn and build a friendly relationship with the Tang. They took the good things back to Japan and enriched their own culture. This shows that at that time the Japanese were very "discriminating," they were able to "appreciate the best of others" and turn it to their own cultural use for a "win-win" outcome.

Modern people should have a much broader vision and be more tolerant than the ancients. They should be able to better appreciate other cultures and be willing to live with them. In fact, our ancestors have bequeathed many profound thoughts and valuable experiences to us. For instance, Confucius says: "do not do to others what you do not wish done to you" with the emphasis on one's self "not doing" instead of demanding that others "do"; then, there are proverbs and sayings such as "cultivate yourself, do not blame others" and "take a step back and the sky opens up" which all advocate self-restraint, forbearance, and humility. These qualities make up a distinctive Chinese philosophy of life, formed over generations of many people living together within an integrated whole.

For human beings to live in a world of "harmony within diversity," it is necessary to encourage a whole new aesthetic and cultural mentality, so that people can gradually develop an outlook of "all appreciate the best together." This will be a profound shift in perspective and thinking and may run counter to many of today's mind-sets

and behavioral norms. There will inevitably be miscomprehension leading to opposition and misinterpretation, and even violent attacks, especially when the interests of certain groups are affected. However, globalization and the information age have advanced to the stage where it is imperative to find ways for all cultures to benefit from them and from each other, so as to build a common prosperity. In the face of such a critical necessity, all opposition and attacks take second place.

4.9 The Best of All Cultures

When discussing how different cultures should coexist, we must learn about and draw upon all the cultures of the world, take the best from all, and be broad-minded, tolerant, and sensitive. At the same time that we Chinese social scientists examine our own culture, we must also study and understand other cultures, so that we can "appreciate the best of others."

In recent years, much attention has been given to the integration of the European Union. The social and economic development of Europe has always lead the way, so the integration of so many different countries and cultures is seen as an experiment in how they will coordinate their relations and exist together in a time of globalization and modernization. Of course, European integration is not necessarily the only model for future "globalization" nor does globalization mean "integration." The world is a far more complex place than Europe, with so many belief systems, traditions, and customs belonging to so many different nations and countries, in addition to so many serious economic, political, and military problems. No single model is ever going to provide all the answers. However, we are interested in the European experiment and practice, because it will provide many enlightening lessons and experiences.

From an anthropological-sociological perspective, all cultures embody the wisdom of mankind and deserve to be studied and learned from. Take India for instance, a country with an ancient history and very complex ethnic and religious relations. Their traditional culture is a gold mine of experience of many peoples, religions, and traditions living together. Other powerful nations and strong cultures, such as the Ottoman Empire, the Russian Empire, the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the Arabian civilization, and South American and African civilizations, are all large multiethnic entities which have had to contend with cultural contacts, communication, and blending and have left a rich heritage of experience and lessons for us.

As anthropologists and sociologists, we have a duty to seriously, conscientiously, and objectively examine our own culture and history and also to apply ourselves to studying the cultures and histories of other nations and peoples. In this way our vision will be broadened, our imagination and creativity stimulated, and we will be able to work toward creating a better society of "harmony within diversity" in this age of rapid economic globalization.

August, 2004

Part II

Chapter 5
Some Thoughts on "Cultural Self-Awareness"

I have raised the subject of "cultural self-awareness" frequently over the past few years. Back in 1997, I first formally used the term at the Second Advanced Workshop on Sociology and Anthropology organized by Peking University. I felt the term described the goal of the forum and summed up what we were discussing. It was an expression of how intellectual circles felt in the face of economic globalization and also of the strong desire to understand why peoples' attitudes change with cultural contacts. Mankind has developed to the point of wanting to know where all these national cultures come from, how they formed, what their essential natures are, and where they are taking us.

I used this expression in my closing speech, but the idea can be traced back to long ago. We all know that, in the first half of the twentieth century, mainstream Chinese thinking revolved around the issues of national and cultural identity. The many different controversies and debates about Chinese and Western cultures in the end boiled down to one issue: under the fierce shocks of Western culture, could modern Chinese people continue to retain their former cultural identity, or must they take on a Western one? Two previous generations of Chinese intellectuals wrestled with this issue all their lives, including Liang Shuming,[1] Chen Yinque,[2] and Qian Mu,[3] whom we all know.

Speech at the 2nd academic seminar of the "International Forum on Chinese Culture in the 21st Century," organized by the China Yanhuang Culture Research Society.

[1] Liang Shuming (1893–1988), Chinese thinker, social activist, and one of the founding fathers of China Democratic League. Liang is a legendary figure: he never received higher education but was invited to teach in Peking University at the age of 28; he grew up in the capital city of Beijing but was devoted to rural reconstruction; he was one representative of Neo-Confucianism but always admired the Buddhist way of life.

[2] Chen Yinque (1890–1969), one of the greatest historians in modern China. Chen was also a linguist, poet, and expert on Chinese classic literature.

[3] Qian Mu (1985–1990), historian, professor of modern Chinese history in Yenching, Tsinghua, etc. universities; moved to Hong Kong in 1949 and then to Taiwan in 1966; academician of the Academia Sinica, researcher at the Palace Museum.

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When I was at Yenching University, I distinctly recall taking an elective undergraduate course titled "Renaissance of Chinese Art" taught by a non-Chinese professor of the History Department. His teaching method was to require us to read English-language materials written by foreigners on the events of Chinese history between 1860 (including the sack of the Palace of Yuan Ming Yuan) up until the 1911 Republican Revolution. I worked very hard for this class, reading the books and articles he assigned and taking many notes. The 50-year period covered the reigns of four emperors and the earliest aggressions first by the British, French, and Russian imperialists and later by others, all the way up until the final tally of 12 nations. Over a dozen unequal treaties were signed. During this half century, major events like the Taiping Rebellion,[4] the Wuxu Reforms,[5] and the Huanghuagang Uprising[6] took place. One recorded incident is etched in my memory to this day: after the Taipings set up their capital in Nanjing, one of Zeng Guofan's[7] generals by the name of Hu Linyi was garrisoned at Ma'anshan in today's Anhui province. One day when he was reviewing his troops by the river, a foreign warship came steaming by. At the sight of it, General Hu fainted on the spot. When asked why, he said he was confident of overcoming the Taipings, but felt helpless against such a vessel. This was symptomatic of the ruling class of the Qing dynasty (1644–1911). They saw how far behind China was in technology compared to the West and were intimidated and capitulated, leading to the subsequent humiliating and disastrous consequences.

In this clash with Western culture, the Qing accepted defeat. This was a huge turning point. If we go back into the past, we see that the Qing government used to consider itself "the mightiest nation under Heaven" and looked upon all foreign emissaries as "coming to pay tribute." Emperor Qianlong (reigning from 1736 to 1796), proud of the wealth of his empire, declared that it needed no trade with the foreigners, and any exchange was a favor to them. When the British delegation asked for an audience, he demanded that they all kneel and kowtow to him. At that time, there was no question of defeat.

Since the Chinese and Western cultures first clashed, Chinese intellectuals have been preoccupied with comparing the two. The arguments over the fate of the Chinese nation and the changes in society raged for years, and we can say they continue to the present day. In the mid-nineteenth century, well before the May Fourth

[4] Peasant rebellion in the mid-nineteenth century lasting about 20 years, led by Hong Xiuquan against the Qing dynasty and foreign aggressors.

[5] Initiated in 1898, the year of Wuxu, by Kang Youwei and others, who attempted through Emperor Guangxu to put in place bourgeois political reforms. The movement only lasted 103 days.

[6] On April 27, 1911, members of China's first bourgeois political party, the Tongmenghui, began an uprising against Qing feudal rule. Led by Huang Xing, 120 daring members attacked the headquarters of the Qing governor in Guangzhou. The uprising failed and 72 of them, known as the Seventy-two Martyrs, were killed and buried in Huanghuagang.

[7] Zeng Guofan (1811–1872), a major official of Han ethnic group in the Manchu court of the later Qing dynasty, founder and commander of the Xiang Army.

Movement in 1919,[8] some had already proposed the concept of "Western knowledge" which called for learning the West's technology in order to improve China. This was described as "Chinese learning for substance, Western learning for use."At that time, people still did not doubt the soundness of their traditional political and ethical order. However, by the time of the May Fourth Movement, the problems were no longer going to be solved by "Western knowledge" alone. It was a case of replacing China's old culture with the new modern Western one, which is why the Movement was also called the New Culture Movement. Many drew upon the ideas of the European Enlightenment, principally democracy and science, as they sought to overturn and replace the traditional system. This led to two major debates over "science versus metaphysics" and "democracy versus autocracy." Then in 1921 the Chinese Communist Party was born and Marxism became the belief of many young people. "Whither China?" was the question intellectual circles could no longer ignore. Then, the War Against Japanese Aggression (1937–1945) broke out, and in the face of the national crisis and looming disaster, the debate subsided. However, the intelligentsia continued to ponder the kind of society and culture that should be built after the war. There is no doubt that many people were extremely attracted to the idea of building a brand new, ideal society that would be a complete break with the past. The overwhelming trend was to reject the traditional, and even if there were voices reminding of the need to find a balance between the old and the new, no one listened. After the end of the War Against Japan Aggression, the political changes in the country also caused shifts in the thinking of Chinese intellectuals. With the founding of New China in 1949, huge transformations occurred on the Mainland, and the intelligentsia threw itself into the task of building socialism under the guidance of Marxism. When we review the past, it's clear that whether it was the Wuxu Reforms in the late nineteenth century, the New Culture of the May Fourth Movement in 1919, or the many political campaigns after 1949, all declared the necessity of breaking with the past and looked upon "tradition" as the antithesis of "modernity." Chinese traditional culture was seen as the enemy of modernization. At the height of the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976), the idea was to sweep away all traditions and make people believe there was no use for Chinese culture anymore.

So Chinese culture has gone through a difficult process as it transformed from traditional to modern. Chinese intellectuals have explored and searched for ways to enable our culture to advance and merge with the trends of the time. Many new ideas have been proposed, resulting in different schools of thought, such as the philosophy of New Confucianism that also draws on history. I am not that familiar with these issues, but recently read an article by Mr. Ying-shih Yu in which he wrote that "New Confucianism" is a school of thought that originated overseas in the twentieth century, and he refers specifically to a piece published in January 1958 in the Hong Kong journal *Democratic Critique*. The Authors Carsun Chang, Hsu Foo-kwan, Mou Tsung-san, and T'ang Chün-i issued "A Manifesto on the Reappraisal of

[8] Large student protests in Beijing against China's signing the humiliating terms of the Treaty of Versailles in 1919.

Chinese Culture: Our Joint Understanding of the Sinological Study Relating to World Culture Outlook."[9] Of course, my circumstances at the time prevented me from knowing anything about this or what happened afterward, and anyway, intellectuals on the Mainland were not concerned with these issues then. However, now we must go back and look into them.

This situation lasted up until the start of the reforms and opening up (1978), when we began to reconsider these matters. If we wish to identify the distinctive features of Chinese culture, we cannot break with the past. In the 1960s, the intelligentsia in Taiwan and Hong Kong also debated this topic, and many were interested in finding how "tradition" and "modernity" could "fit together." In other words, culture is formed not only by "rooting out the old to bring in the new" but also by "reviewing the past to understand the present." "Modernity" is not only breaking away from "tradition" but also continuing and renewing it.

On a personal note, my own education started at the end of the Qing dynasty and in the early Republican years. It was called the "new learning" and was set up to replace the traditional private schools that taught purely for the imperial examinations. My father became a *xiucai* in the last round of these examinations which were abolished shortly afterward. Thanks to the reforms, he was then sent to Japan to study pedagogy. Upon his return, he opened a middle school that followed the "new learning." My mother set up the first county *mengyang yuan* (kindergarten and primary school) where I first started classes, so I never studied in an old-fashioned private school which taught the Four Books and the Five Classics.[10] I never even read the *Three Character Classic* (*Sanzi jing*) or *Hundred Family Surnames* (*Baijia xing*). My lessons were from the newest primary school textbooks printed by the Commercial Press, and we learned "man," "hand," "foot," "knife," and "ruler," all "new learning" materials. We did not have to sit facing the wall to recite ancient texts or get no individual attention; instead, we got to sing and play games. After the first few years, I entered a private school also run according to "new learning" principles by a returnee from abroad. After that, I attended a missionary college, went from Soochow to Yenching University, entered Tsinghua Graduate Institute, and then

[9] The Manifesto (*Wei zhongguo wenua jinggao shijie renshi xuanyan*: *women dui zhongguo xueshu yanjiu ji zhongguo wenhua yu shijiewenhua qiantu zhi gongtong renshi*, 《为中国文化敬告世界人士宣言:我们对中国学术研究及中国文化与世界文化前途之共同认识》) was first published in the new year's issue of Democratic Critique (*Minzhu pinglun*, 《民主评论》) and Renaissance (Zaisheng, 《再生》) simultaneously. It was then collected in Tang's *On the Withering of Chinese Nationality* (*Shuo zhonghua minzu zhi huaguo piaoling*,《说中华民族之花果飘零》, Taipei: Sanmin Publishing Inc., 1974) under the title of "Chinese Culture and the World" (*Zhongguo wenhua yu shijie*, 《中国文化与世界》). There was also a condensed English version of the Manifesto ("A Manifesto for a Reappraisal of Sinology and Reconstruction of Chinese Culture," in Carsun Chang, *The Development of Neo-Confucian Thought*, vol. 2, New York: Bookman, 1962).

[10] The Four Books are *The Great Learning* (*Daxue*, 《大学》), *Confucian Analects* (*Lunyu*, 《论语》), *The Works of Mencius* (*Mengzi*, 《孟子》), and *The Doctrine of the Mean* (*Zhongyong*, 《中庸》) and the Five Classics *The Book of Poetry* (*Shijing*, 《诗经》), *The Book of Historical Documents* (*Shujing*, 《书经》), *The Books of Rites* (*Liji*, 《礼记》), the *Book of Changes* (*Yijing*, 《易经》), and the *Spring and Autumn Annals* (*Chunqiu*, 《春秋》). The English book titles are mostly cited from *The Chinese Classics* translated by James Legge.

went to the United Kingdom. My whole education was in the "new learning" system influenced by Western culture. My parents supported new learning, and we children were not taught in the traditional way, which they rejected. That's why I do not have a strong foundation in the subjects of traditional Chinese culture. Personally, I have never felt great tension between Chinese and Western culture. However, this is very different from the generation born before mine. They grew up in the traditional culture and were steeped in its ideas and values, which gave them an intimate understanding of its qualities and a strong sense of identity, which is why they took the position of "absorbing the new Western ways without losing our own." For example, Mr. Chen Yinque said, "Let us absorb the ideas from outside, but not forget our own national qualities"; and Mr. Qian Mu said, "I may sound conservative, but I am working towards reform." Scholars like them could not accept the simple polarized view of "advanced" versus "backward." Given the mainstream ideas of the age, their wanting the new without giving up the old placed them in a serious quandary.

At the age of 70, I resumed my research in sociology and anthropology and started my second academic career. I judged that I probably had about 10 years left and hoped in this remaining time to still contribute to the development of Chinese social sciences and humanities. A basic starting point for these sciences is to "seek knowledge from facts." The first thing is to know your own local culture, not just to conserve it, but to transform it, so-called "weed out the old to let in the new." When I proposed "cultural self-awareness," it was not because comparison with the West made me think there was a crisis in Chinese culture, but because this is the issue I had encountered when I first began to study the ethnic minority peoples. Toward the end of the 1980s, I went to visit the place in Inner Mongolia where the Olunchun people are concentrated. This ethnic group has always lived in the forest and has developed and passed down a culture based on hunting and raising deer and uniquely adapted to a forest environment. The degradation of the forest over the last century is threatening the survival of this small group of several thousand people. In the 1990s, I studied the Hezhe, another small ethnic group of only a couple of thousand members who live off fishing in Heilongjiang province. They are facing the same problem. Today, there are 22 "small ethnic groups" with less than 100,000 members in China. How will they survive in a time of huge social change? Especially today in the information age when culture is evolving so rapidly, these peoples are facing the critical issue of how to preserve their own local cultures. I believe the only way is through a cultural transformation, in which they identify and develop the strengths of their indigenous cultures so that they can then not only survive but also continue to evolve. Cultural transformation is probably common to the whole of mankind. That's why I believe that "cultural self-awareness" can apply equally well to small groups, to the entire Chinese nation, and to the whole of mankind. It means that those living within a specific culture must first "know themselves," know where they came from, how their culture developed, which are its distinguishing features, and how it is evolving. Self-knowledge is necessary in order to have more control over one's cultural transformation, to have more control over the cultural choices that will have to be made when adapting to the new environment and era.

With global economic integration, a very practical issue is how Chinese civilization should cope as the society develops, and this is the first thing that comes up in any discussion of "cultural self-awareness." I am reminded of a conversation I had at the end of the 1990s with Taiwanese Anthropologist Prof. Li Yiyuan, on Chinese culture, sociology, and anthropology in the new era.

I raised a number of issues I had been pondering and how those of us who study culture should focus on answering them. For example, when we talk about socialism with Chinese characteristics, we mean the process by which Marxism has been applied to Chinese reality and practice and in this case produced Mao Zedong's thought and later Deng Xiaoping's theories. Aspects of Chinese culture must have been affecting this whole process in the background, but what were they, and how they influenced things is still unclear to us. As Prof. Li and I discussed these matters, we singled out a number of cultural features.

First is the great importance of the family unit and the key role it plays. After the start of the reforms, the household contract responsibility system in the countryside had the effect of promptly liberating rural productivity. Subsequently, in the course of rural industrialization, the most dynamic actors were once again family-owned industries. This set me thinking about what drives the growth of Chinese society, and I came to the conclusion that one of its special features is the sense of connection between the generations. An individual does not consider himself or herself that important, what is important is bringing honor to one's ancestors and carrying on the family line by raising worthy children.

Second, "one country, two systems" is not merely a political arrangement, it involves the possibility of two different things coexisting within a single framework, and so there is a cultural underpinning too. This means that within the DNA of Chinese culture is something that can bring and bind opposites together. There can be a unity of opposites.

Third, "diversity within integration" is also a manifestation of Chinese culture. It includes "appreciating one's own best, and appreciating the best of others," an ability to find the beauty in differences, so that there is a genuine, heartfelt admiration, understanding, and empathy for others, not merely a short-term toleration for the sake of some goal or interest. Only in this way can there be mutual tolerance, a coming together, and coexistence between peoples and countries to attain "harmony with diversity" and common prosperity.

Fourth is the consideration of the other, an extremely important element in Chinese social relations. "Treat the other's elderly with reverence as I treat my own, treat the other's children with kindness as I treat my own."[11] Placing oneself in the other's shoes, thinking about how the other will feel produces what I have called "differential modes of association."[12] This attitude is not made up, it is a genuine

[11] A quotation from *The Works of Mencius*.

[12] This term was an original creation by Fei Xiaotong to characterize the pattern of social relationships in traditional China. In *From the Soil*, Fei explains it as follows: "Our pattern [differential mode of association]… is like the circles that appear on the surface of a lake when a rock is thrown into it. Everyone stands at the center of the circles produced by his or her own social influence."

part of the everyday life of ordinary people, a way of interacting that has been distilled over the long centuries of Chinese culture. During the Cultural Revolution, these attitudes were completely rejected and discredited, but I believe they should not be and that they cannot be denied.

Today, we are still unable to say that we have an absolutely clear theoretical understanding of the essence of Chinese culture, but it definitely seems to have evolved from much-admired Confucian principles, namely, "integrity, sincerity, self-cultivation, family unity, national order, and peace for all."[13] This is the accumulation of thousands of years of practical experience, and if we could apply it today, there could be positive results. Our Chinese culture contains many unique things that could resolve many practical problems and difficult questions. Our task now is to use modern language to express these features in a way understandable to all, so that they become widely recognized and accepted.

The shock waves of Western culture over so many decades, and especially the blows of the Cultural Revolution, have destroyed a lot of "tradition." People are still not aware of their serious damage. At the same time, those who could carry on the academic legacy of the previous generations of scholars with their deep cultural knowledge are still not formed yet. This is why I feel the intelligentsia has a heavy responsibility. I said earlier that I am keenly aware of my deficiencies in traditional Chinese studies, and in an attempt to make up for them over the last few years, I have studied the works of Chen Yinque, Liang Shuming, and Qian Mu. I have learned a great deal and deepened my understanding of the spirit of Chinese culture; my research into comparative Chinese and Western culture has also shifted to another level.

At the same time, I feel a certain "distance" from the major global trends. Since the reforms, we now once again "scan the world" and I myself have been abroad on numerous academic visits. In the beginning, I was dazzled by the rapid technological developments of the West, such as the computer and information technology I described in my book *Glimpses of America*.[14] By the 1990s, with the breakup of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War, the world configuration changed radically and Western opinion "loudly proclaimed its victory." Although I critiqued S. Huntington's "clash of civilizations" theory, I was still not sensitive to the deeper aspects of Chinese and Western cultures. As I have said before when I talked about "traveling on and on," my proposal of "cultural self-awareness" is an effort to keep up with the social and economic developments within China, and it springs from the developmental problems I observed in the ethnic minority regions.

(p. 46) He also emphasizes, "In the pattern of Chinese organization, our social relationships…form a network composed of each individual's personal connections" (p. 54). See detailed explanation in Fei Xiaotong, *From the Soil—The Foundations of Chinese Society* (*Xiangtu Zhongguo*, 《乡土中国》), trans. by Gary G. Hamilton and Wang Zheng, Beijing: Foreign Language Teaching and Research Publishing, 2012.

[13] A quotation from *The Great Learning*.

[14] Fei Xiaotong, *Glimpses of America* (*Fangmei lueying*, 《访美掠影》), Beijing: SDX Joint Publishing Company, 1980.

The September 11 attacks in the United States last year (2001) shocked me greatly. It seemed to me that this was yet another strong warning to Western culture. Subsequent developments also disappointed me, because in the "use of terrorism to counter terrorism" I saw in Western values a belittlement of the importance of culture and the spirit, and a reluctance to deal with cultural relations in a rational and factual manner. This is something we should think about very seriously. That's why I want to probe a number of issues on a theoretical level, such as the relationship between the individual and culture and the social and historical nature of culture, so as to attain a deeper comparison between Chinese and Western cultures.

In May this year, at the centennial of the founding of Nanjing University, I gave a talk entitled "Rethinking the Man/Nature Relation Within a Theory of Culture"[15] in which I explored these issues. Human beings are biologically just like any other animal, with a fixed life span that extends from birth to death. However, because humans live in groups that share a common body of knowledge, and because they copy each other's ways to sustain themselves, they are no longer mere biological beings but have become social beings. Every biological human learns from infancy how to gradually become a social being and thus to survive until the end of its biological life span. When we talk about "life" (*shengming*), we are referring to the biological being; when we talk about "living" (*shenghuo*), we are referring to the social being. "Living" sustains "life" until the organism dies, but ways of "living" are developed through inherited physical aptitudes of the organism that allow behaviors to be learned from others. The thoughts and behaviors of an individual from infancy until death are all learned from others within that group. This learned way of living, together with its tools and vessels, existed long before the individual began to acquire it, and all are provided by that same group. These make up what I call the human world and are the components of a specific culture. The moment a biological baby emerges from its mother's body, it relies for life upon the society of the human world created by its predecessors. The human world is the setting in which biological beings become social beings; it has existed from the time of the first humans and is the collective creation of generations of social beings. The accumulation of life experiences has become, through learning, the common assets and basis for life of the group. Confucius said that to learn with a constant perseverance and application.[16] This is how a biological human organism becomes a member of a society.

Analyzing the human world reveals that each component was originally created by separate social individuals who relied on their innate abilities to interact with nature and that over the years, each generation has contributed something. Once these separate creations became widely accepted, they became part of the human world and no longer belonged to any one individual anymore. This is the social nature of culture that we need to understand in depth.

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[15] Fei Xiaotong, "Rethinking the Man/Nature Relation Within a Theory of Culture" (in Chinese, *Wenhualun zhong ren yu ziran guanxi de zai renshi*, 《文化论中人与自然关系的再认识》), *Popular Tribune* (*Qunyan*, 《群言》), no. 9, 2002.

[16] The first sentence of *Confucian Analects*.

Culture is constructed by humans, but this was only in the initial stages when the first "pieces" appeared. A culture is maintained within a group by the members who have accepted it. A group of social beings learns from each other and uses the material objects and nonmaterial assets of the human world to live, one could call it using both the hardware and the software. All biological beings must die, but the tools of existence and the behaviors of social beings, i.e., the components of culture, do not pass away with the individual. Since biological humans have nonequivalent lives, the social nature of culture is transmitted through differential modes of association, which means that culture can avoid the law of organic life and death and instead possesses its own historical cycles of growth and decay. This is the historical nature of culture or the human world.

A more in-depth understanding of the social and historical nature of culture can help us to get a better understanding of culture itself. I have noted that East and West have very different cultural values and that the traditions of Chinese culture start out from a very different premise compared to that of the West. The so-called New Confucians of a former generation wrestled with this problem and examined it in great depth using the methods of history studies. They proposed a number of unique viewpoints. For a genuine understanding of the features of Chinese culture so that we can compare it with Western culture, we have to go back into historical research. We must build on the legacy of previous scholars to abstract the best of Chinese culture to apply in the present. As we continue contacts and exchanges with the West, we must first of all clarify to ourselves the best of our own civilization before we can present it to the world, in other words, first localization and then globalization. This mission is very arduous because at this point we still need to train more people, so over the next decades this will be an important task. At this point in time, we should create a favorable climate for people to "scan the world" and follow the main trends. I myself am too old to observe and study deeply anymore. However, I believe that the cultural contacts accompanying globalization will inevitably cause major shocks sooner or later and that we must be prepared to take part in this gigantic world debate. That is why, on the one hand, we must recognize the fine aspects of our culture and study our history with modern scientific tools, so that we can become "culturally self-aware" and create a new Chinese culture. On the other hand, we must also deepen our understanding of other cultures so that we can resolve the problems that arise when cultures meet. This will contribute to the future of mankind.

August 6, 2002

Chapter 6
"Cultural Self-Awareness" and the Historical Responsibility of Chinese Scholars

A decade ago, the Ministry of Education invited me to speak at the International Conference on Infant and Child Education in the 21st Century. Since then, I have been thinking about how we should start from childhood to bring up the people who will live in the twenty-first century. Mankind has made the world what it is today, and mankind must nurture the people who inhabit it. As educators, this is our responsibility.

My talk was entitled "Starting Young—Nurturing the Citizens of the 21st Century," and in it I examined the world of the twenty-first century and what I thought would be the major issues it will face: that is, how will people from different cultures and with different value systems live peacefully together in an increasingly economically interconnected world? How will mankind coexist on this small planet? Within our culture, we should build an educational system that will foster mutual understanding, tolerance, and coexistence, what I call a system of cross-cultural communication. It should include the basic rules of common survival, which will also naturally guide the basic relations of person to person, person to society, and person to nature. Subsequently, I wrote a number of papers that were presented at three sessions of the Advanced Seminar on Society, Culture and Anthropology organized by Peking University and at three international academic conferences. These appeared under "Learning the Theory of Culture from Professor Malinowski—Some Thoughts,"[1] "Reflection, Dialogue, Cultural Self-Awareness,"[2]

Section 4 of "Rebuilding Sociology and Anthropology—Review and Comments," Chinese Sociology, no. 1, 2000

[1] Fei Xiaotong, *Cong Malinnosiji laoshi xuexi wenhualun de tihui* (《从马林诺斯基老师学习文化论的体会》), *Journal of Peking University* (Philosophy and Social Sciences), No. 2, 1996.

[2] Fei Xiaotong, *Fansi duihua wenhua zijue* (《反思·对话·文化自觉》), *Journal of Peking University* (Philosophy and Social Sciences), No. 3, 1997.

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"After Reading Malinowski's Posthumous Work *The Dynamics of Culture Change*,"[3] "Thoughts on the Grave of Confucius,"[4] *Researching Man in China*,[5] "A Reexamination of Humanistic Values,"[6] "Challenges Facing Chinese Culture in the New Millennium," and[7] "Chinese Culture, Sociology and Anthropology in the New Century—Conversations with Li Yiyuan."[8]

After many discussions and much thought, I proposed the concept of "cultural self-awareness" as a response of intellectual circles to current economic globalization. Extensive cultural encounters in all parts of the world have created many kinds of reactions and raised urgent new questions in people's minds: Why do we live like this? What is the meaning of this way of life? What are the consequences? In other words, mankind has matured to the point of wanting to know where our different cultures came from, how they evolved, what their essence is, and where they will take us. These emerging questionings are why I propose the need for "cultural self-awareness."

This kind of awareness is a necessity of our times, not any one individual's wishful thinking. All those who study social anthropology are naturally very sensitive to people's questionings and have taken note of these urgent problems. This is why in my old age, on the cusp of the new millennium, I call for cultural self-awareness in the hope that we will all reexamine our own societies and cultures and strive for a fuller understanding of them on the basis of positivist thinking and actual facts.

Cultural self-awareness means that those who live within a specific culture have a true understanding of it, know where it comes from, how it developed, which its unique features are, and how it is evolving. Cultural awareness does not mean "cultural regression" or bringing back the past; it advocates neither a total "Westernization" nor a "hanging on to tradition." This kind of self-knowledge is to increase the capacity for deliberate and conscious choices in the process of cultural transformation that occurs under new circumstances and in a new age. Acquiring this self-awareness is not easy and will take a long time because it means first of all knowing one's own culture and then knowing the many cultures it encounters. After that, it may be possible to find one's place in this culturally diverse world, and through conscious adaptation absorb the strengths of others, and together build a commonly acceptable order in which all cultures can coexist, flower, and grow.

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[3] Fei Xiaotong, *Du Malaoshi Yizhu* Wenhua Dongtailun *shu hou* (《读马老师遗著<文化动态论>书后》), *Journal of Peking University* (Philosophy and Social Sciences), No. 5, 1998.

[4] Fei Xiaotong, *Konglin piansi* (《孔林片思》), *Dushu*, No. 10, 1992.

[5] Fei Xiaotong, *Ren de yanjiu zai zhongguo* (《人的研究在中国》), Tianjin: Tianjin People's Publishing, 1993.

[6] Fei Xiaotong, *Renwen jiazhi zai sikao* (《人文价值再思考》), *Dushu*, Nos. 9 and 10, 1997.

[7] Fei Xiaotong, *Zhonghua wenhua zai xin shiji mianlin de tiaozhan* (《中华文化在新世纪面临的挑战》), *Literature and Arts Studies*, No. 1, 1999.

[8] Fei Xiaotong and Li Yiyuan, *Zhongguo wenhua yu xinshiji de shehuixue renleixue—Fei Xiaotong Li Yiyuan duihualu* (《中国文化与新世纪的社会学人类学——费孝通、 李亦园对话录》), *Journal of Peking University* (Philosophy and Social Sciences), No. 6, 1996.

Ten years ago on my 80th birthday, I attended a party in Japan with old friends and talked about the prospects for anthropology. I proposed a sentence which sums up what I mean today by cultural awareness: "each appreciates its own best, each appreciates the best of others, all appreciate the best together, to build greater harmony for all." "Each appreciates its own best" comes naturally for scattered human groups who are often quite isolated. "Each appreciates the best of others," however, is an attitude toward other cultures, necessary when groups live and work together. "All appreciate the best together, to build greater harmony for all" means achieving a consensus on human values so that different cultures can coexist and grow peacefully. This dynamic concept of cultural values is an attempt to build a cross-cultural dialogue so that all can communicate and learn from each other, to achieve that old saying "harmony with diversity."

Throughout its long history, the large Chinese population has developed a culture that highly values human relationships. This worldview should have its place in the pantheon of world thought. Let us not forget how, over the 50 centuries of our civilization, the Chinese people have never stopped creating and developing and experimenting and implementing. We should thoroughly review and understand the past experiences of hundreds of generations of our forebears for the sake of the new millennium.

Historically speaking, Chinese culture has demonstrated great inclusiveness, but not in all periods. The fullest manifestation of this quality occurred at certain historical times, the most notable being the Period of Spring and Autumn and Warring States Period (770–221 BC) and the Han (206 BC–AD 220), Sui (581–618), and Tang (618–907) dynasties, when inclusiveness was at its height. From this we can conclude that the finest cultural characteristics are strongest when the nation too is strong. We have every reason to believe that, in the new century, China will enter a period of national strength and wealth, so we should also realize that a new historical opportunity is appearing for those who will live in this period to give full play to the uniqueness of our culture.

At specific times in history, there emerges a need to create a new trend. I believe this new trend now is cultural self-awareness. Many recent events indicate that nations are demanding to know more about their own culture and are asking questions. The humanities and social sciences are duty bound to provide answers. Natural science has progressed very fast, biological research means we can now plot our own genome, and technology allows us to extend our scope from Earth to outer space. We in the social sciences and humanities must keep up with the times and work hard to understand our own cultures. It seems to me this desire is already appearing in many countries. Here in China, we must not miss this historical opportunity to join and push forward this new trend. Starting in the Renaissance and up to the nineteenth century, "man's self-awareness" developed in the West, an important chapter in human cultural development. In the twenty-first century, it looks as if there will be a surge of "mankind's cultural self-awareness." The Chinese people with their own cultural self-knowledge should be leading the way.

A good place to start this inquiry would be to focus on and probe the inclusiveness of Chinese culture. The now familiar concept of "one country, two systems"

not only demonstrates this quality vividly but also bears the stamp of the times and is highly significant. I believe that its successful implementation does not only have political importance but also cultural implications, since it involves whether or not two different social systems can tolerate each other and coexist. It is a novel and important idea, something completely different from the "Cold War mentality." Its application is a very significant experiment at the end of the twentieth century and offers a good example of a rational approach to multiculturalism. Under most circumstances, capitalism and socialism are at opposite poles and diametrically at odds. Their confrontation over the decades of the Cold War was the most outstanding historical event of the twentieth century. Yet in China they can coexist. Possibly this is an indication of the continuing evolution of Chinese culture's inherent inclusiveness. One knows a leopard from its spots, so this kind of effort can give us confidence that, as world culture develops, different systems will be able to coexist peacefully under certain conditions and that it is possible to have a unity of opposites and "harmony with diversity." This period of Chinese history since the return of Hong Kong is evidence that different social systems can coexist peacefully and that in the process, they become increasingly complementary, each pushing the other forward.

We have still not been able to explain fully how the inherent inclusiveness of Chinese culture permeated the whole process of "one country, two systems" from conception to final implementation. There is no doubt that there are many elements within Chinese culture that could help to resolve some of the very real and difficult problems facing mankind. This is indisputable, otherwise how does one explain the enormous dynamism and vigor of our 5,000 years of history? The task now is to unearth and express these elements, and this is what cultural self-awareness is about.

This inclusiveness is closely linked with the cultural value of "harmony with diversity" proposed by our ancient sages. "Harmony with diversity" is the same as "diverse and complementary," which expresses the blending force of Chinese culture, one of the reasons for its uninterrupted development through the ages. In my paper "Diverse yet Integrated—Configuration of the Chinese Nation,"[9] I proposed the role played by "diversity within integration" in the course of the formation of the Chinese nation. There has been wide agreement and support for this theory in academic circles. The many different cultures that mixed and fused as Chinese civilization were forming all influenced and borrowed from each other to eventually build our traditional culture of "harmony with diversity." This historical development has given us a deep appreciation of diverse and rich cultural forms and a belief in cultural dialogue and blending. Extending this attitude out to the rest of the world would mean that different cultures respect each other and communicate, which would in turn enhance each cultures' own development.

If we look into this further, we find that Chinese culture has its own unique attitude toward relations with different peoples and cultures. From ancient times,

[9]This paper *Zhonghua minzu de duoyuan yiti geju* (《中华民族的多元一体格局》) was first presented by the author in Tanner Lecture hosted by the Chinese University of Hong Kong in 1988. It was published on *Journal of Peking University* (Philosophy and Social Sciences), no. 4, 1989.

the preference has been on rule by benevolence and righteousness, not by hegemonic violence. We say "He who, using force, makes a pretense to benevolence, is the leader of the princes…He who, using virtue, practices benevolence, is the sovereign of the empire."[10] This means relying on benevolence and ethics when dealing with others, giving them as much consideration as oneself. From ancient times down to the present, *Confucian Analects* have been respected as the words of a sage, which means that his precepts for human interactions are fully accepted by most. These ideas can continue to have a positive effect in modern society. The precepts "put oneself in another's position," "do not do to others what you do not wish done to you," and "treat others' elderly with reverence as I treat my own, treat others' children with kindness as I treat my own"[11] build mutual respect, tolerance, restraint, and shared benefit so that cooperation is possible. People bound together by ethics and morality are very stable, which is why we say "using virtue to practice benevolence" is most effective. I believe these experiences of Chinese history and culture can provide valuable food for thought as we try to build a new peaceful order in the twenty-first century.

As members of the Chinese nation, we have a duty to learn and understand our culture, to study the foundations of our traditions so that we can become a part of building a modern Chinese culture, in preparation for the new world culture of the future.

October 30, 1999

[10]The translated line is quoted from *The Works of Mencius* (trans. James Legge, The Chinese Classics, vol. 2, Four Books, Taipei: SMC Publishing Inc., 1991).

[11]All quotes *Confucian Analects* (trans. James Legge, The Chinese Classics, vol. 2, Four Books, Taipei: SMC Publishing Inc., 1991).

Chapter 7
From Retrospection to Cultural Self-Awareness and Exchange

These last few years, I have set myself the task of reviewing my published scholarly work, to examine how and why I came by my ideas, to consider how they hold up in the present, and whether they need amending or even revising. This can be called my attempt at personal "cultural self-awareness." Academic retrospection applies to the individual, and cultural self-awareness is its extension, by which an individual goes from personal to his/her culture and from his/her scholarly growth to a whole evolving discipline. Through academic retrospection, a person seeks to understand his/her own thinking, while cultural self-awareness is an attempt to understand the culture that nurtured him. The goal is to open up cultural dialogue and exchange, so the starting point must be the individual scholar's own academic retrospection. I believe the one automatically leads to the other.

This present piece is not just a personal reflection on my academic past and a reexamination of my ideas and thinking, it is also a retrospection on social anthropology itself, so it could be called an attempt at cultural self-awareness for the whole field of social anthropology.

Both anthropology and sociology started off by trying to understand culture and society, which means I think, first and foremost, knowing oneself. As a living being, I have grown up within a certain culture and everything I am comes from it. However, it's not that easy to understand one's own culture. By 1979, when I visited Chicago, the field of cross-cultural communication that advocated cultural dialogue was already well established. Any basis for cultural exchange must start from self-knowledge. This is something I have aspired to throughout my life. Yet even after all these years and so much writing, I can still only say I have just begun. I call "culture" the man-made "human world," constructed by our predecessors and now by us. So how have we done? We live in it, but we really don't know it since no one has ever told us about it. I am getting old now, and I want to know just what I have learned since childhood: what kind of culture I grew up in, how to analyze it, how to understand it, what role it has played in my life, how it has changed, why it has changed, where it is going, etc. I believe all these questions are what anthropologists

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and sociologists must observe and study. In other words, we must use the scientific method of examining the objective world to directly look at, observe, and analyze the facts, patterns, configurations, and basic laws of social life. This is knowledge of society, of the world around us, and also of ourselves. This kind of knowledge can help us meet our living needs.

Last night, I received a copy of my latest book published by Peking University Press, called *Seeking Knowledge from Reality*.[1] It is a collection of my writings of the past few years, in which I review my academic ideas. Why this title? Because it traces the process through which I have learned by examining reality. I may not have acquired much knowledge over these years, and some of it might be incorrect, but it all comes directly from real life. So this volume records this process and traces the development of my thinking over the past six decades.

Starting from 1995, I really began to feel my years. Prior to that, I had never really considered myself old, just as Confucius said, I did not "perceive that old age was coming." But after 1995, I began to feel my energy failing, all the signs of "aging" began to appear: I could not speak for as long as before, and I needed someone to lean on when I walked. I still wanted to do many things, but no longer had the energy. My living body and my spiritual needs from this human world could no longer keep up with each other. So I began to think: I am getting old, but I'm still breathing; there is a period of time between age and death, the so-called old but alive, so what should I do in it? We Chinese talk about "matters after death," and that is exactly what I began to think about. When I wrote *Reproductive Systems*,[2] I developed an idea that society, like the human being, has a "metabolism." I coined a term "social replacement." Society must grow, so population must be replenished; the new enter, and the old withdraw, but in this process of withdrawal, there is a period of "old but still living." Inevitably, a person going through this period will start to think about the end of biological life, a moment decided by God, what we Chinese call fate (*ming*) or the will of Heaven. A person also realizes that the so-called human world will continue after his/her death, and hence, a desire arises to do something more, to leave something of influence behind. That's what I began to consider in 1995, and in concrete terms that meant retrospection: examining with the eyes of the present the origins and processes of my thinking and reflecting on how they came about. I reckon I still have a few more years to go yet, and so I am using them to review my past writings, why I wrote them, was I correct or not, and to do some self-criticism. I wrote an article which I called "Seeing How Others See Me,"[3] in which I examined how others evaluated my writings and myself. It was really very interesting, and I suggest you try it when you get to my age. Look at yourself, critique yourself, and then look at how others have seen you and criticized you. It's not only interesting but highly instructive too, because one can go into things a little more deeply.

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[1] In Chinese, *Congshi qiuzhi lu* (《从实求知录》), Beijing: Peking University Press, 1998.

[2] In Chinese, *Shengyu zhidu* (《生育制度》), Beijing: Commercial Press, 1999.

[3] In Chinese, *Wo kan ren kan wo* (《我看人看我》), in *Dushu*, no. 3, 1983.

How did I conduct this retrospection? One way was to start from my teachers, since they were the source of my ideas. My knowledge and ideas all came from them. The first to influence me was Mr. Wu Wenzao,[4] the second was Mr. Pan Guangdan,[5] and then came three foreigners: one was Robert E. Park,[6] the second was Sergei M. Shirokogoroff,[7] and the third was Bronislaw K. Malinowski.[8] So what did I learn from them? I wrote an article about Mr. Wu Wenzao called "Setting a Trend, Nurturing Talent."[9] He proposed two important ideas for China, one was advocating a Chinese sociology; the other was to combine anthropology with sociology, employing anthropological methods to study Chinese society and relying on empirical investigation to develop new ideas and theories. Mr. Pan's influence came from his concepts of "two worlds," one of man's relationship to objects and the other of man's relationship to man. Based on his ideas, I proposed the concept of the "human world."

How to understand this concept? This goes back a long way and has deep roots. Sima Qian (145–87 BC), the Chief Imperial Historian during the Han dynasty (206 BC–AD 220), followed his father's wishes and compiled *Records of the Grand Historian* (《史记》). His father exhorted him to do two things: "study the link between Heaven and Man, and grasp the changes of history." There are various interpretations of "study the link between Heaven and Man." I understand "Heaven" to mean the natural world. Man as a product of the natural world, not an alien from somewhere else, must find his place in it and cannot escape from this objective reality. But man can make use of the natural world to create a "human world" and through this to support human existence and development. In this sense, man is both a part of the natural world and also its antithesis. One of Malinowski's key ideas is that culture is created by humans to fulfill their needs. The natural world has evolved from having no life forms to having life forms, and from them culture has emerged. The process is unfinished, and evolution and change are still occurring. Taken all together, that constitutes history. So to understand this whole process, it is necessary to study both the link between Man and Nature and to grasp the changes of history. In fact, one can say that scholarship in China down the ages has always focused on these two aspects. I think human knowledge generally has also come from these two processes. As I understand it, they are also the goals of both anthropology and sociology. The ancients explained this all a long time ago, but today we still don't seem to grasp it that well.

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[4] Wu Wenzao (1901–1985), prominent Chinese sociologist, anthropologist, and ethnologist.

[5] Pan Guangdan (1899–1967), Chinese sociologist, eugenicist, and ethnologist.

[6] Robert E. Park (1864–1944), American urban sociologist.

[7] Sergei M. Shirokogoroff (1837–1939), founder of Russian anthropology, pioneer in modern anthropology, lived and taught in China for many years.

[8] Bronislaw K. Malinowski (1884–1942), Polish-British sociologist and anthropologist, originated the school of social anthropology. He instructed Fei's doctoral dissertation *Peasant Life in China* and contributed a preface to it.

[9] In Chinese, *Kai fengqi, yu renca* (《开风气, 育人才》), in *Journal of Peking University* (Philosophy and Social Sciences), no. 1, 1996.

I really feel my time is running out and my energy is too. In his biography of Robert Park, Raushenbush called the last chapter "So Little Time." Indeed, now that I am old, I truly feel that time goes by quickly and life is short. I don't seem to have enough time to even think about things, much less to really understand them and write them down.

So my retrospection began with my teachers, and that's when I discovered that I have not truly grasped their ideas at all! It's not easy to understand an older generation. You may ask what I have been reading these days: biographies, believe it or not, of Chen Yinque, Gu Jiegang,[10] Fu Sinian,[11] and Qian Mu. The stories of their lives appeal to me. They came from the generation before mine, and I want to know what preoccupied them and how they lived through their times. It's quite fascinating. Take Gu Jiegang who came from my province. He was a generation older, but his cultural background was quite similar to mine, so I find what he writes very familiar. From his biography I learned about many painful struggles, which I empathize with very deeply. I read these biographies to understand them and myself better.

My Chinese teachers were just one generation removed and yet it's not easy to understand them, so how much more so my foreign teachers! Shirokogoroff wrote a great deal and I have read a lot of it, but even now I can't say that I really know him. He taught me physical anthropology and had a huge influence on me, then as well as now. Ten years ago, I proposed "the configuration of diversity within integration of the Chinese nation," and I proudly thought this was my discovery. Now I know that Shirokogoroff had said this a long time ago, so I must state clearly today that this is evidence of how he shaped my thinking.

At the beginning of last summer, I started reading Malinowski's *The Dynamics of Culture Change*.[12] I read it very carefully, but what I am going to say next is still only my interpretation of him and his thinking, in other words "my teacher through my eyes." This work really impresses me. It shows me how his ideas changed and evolved. Malinowski's first well-known work and earliest thinking on the theory of culture were drawn from his firsthand experience living among the Trobriand aborigines. The Trobriand Islands were rather like the place described by our poet Tao Yuanming[13] in his *Peach Blossom Spring*: an isolated, closed, and static culture. Malinowski probed into the daily life of the Islanders, came to know their thoughts and feelings, and was able to uncover their cultural structures. This later led to *A*

[10] Gu Jiegang (1893–1980), prominent and influential scholar of classical studies, founder of the area study of traditional customs and modern geography and history studies in China.

[11] Fu Sinian (1896–1950), historian, leading intellectual of the May Fourth Movement, founder of the Institute of History and Language of the Academia Sinica, acting Chancellor of Peking University, Chancellor of National Taiwan University.

[12] Bronislaw K. Malinowski, *The Dynamics of Culture Change: An Inquiry into Race Relations in Africa,* P. M. Kaberry. ed.; New Haven: Yale University Press, 1946.

[13] Tao Yuanming (365?–427), influential Chinese poet, advocated the ideal life of a recluse.

Scientific Theory of Culture.[14] After the Islands, he went to London and became a professor and never went back again. He pondered the future direction of anthropology. Later still, he came in contact with the African colonies and the lives of their native peoples and saw how their cultures were being destroyed by Western colonialism. This made him very uncomfortable and he developed a dislike for colonialism. He wanted the indigenous cultures to be preserved. I think he might have been feeling what I felt in 1957 when I believed that I could change the world with my knowledge, like Don Quixote. Malinowski was a great proponent of applied sociology, so he wanted to change colonialism and do something good for the colonized. This flew in the face of the times, and it was a dream that could not be fulfilled, because it was impossible to change anything by scholarship alone. However, during this period, Malinowski witnessed a society in upheaval and the reality of cultural shifts, which led him to write *The Dynamics of Culture Change*. This was a huge turning point in the history of anthropology, because it transformed static analysis into dynamic research. He believed this was important for anthropology and that the dynamics of culture change should be its new focus. He was very clear about this, but, unfortunately, he did not live long enough to take part in this shift.

Malinowski's thinking was always closely linked to his practical experience with reality. When reality was static, so was his thinking; when reality changed, so did his thinking and his theories. When reading any book, it is important to know about its author, about when and why it was written, and how the ideas came about. This is the only way to really understand the writer. Malinowski's contributions to anthropology were his shift from library research to on-site field studies, from static to dynamic research, and also his efforts to move from studies of "savages" to the "civilized."

So, what is the principal subject of anthropology and sociology today? We are all interested in this. Before answering the question, I believe we must first be clear about the larger environment in which we live and about what changes are taking place in human culture. After that, we can decide on the direction of our work. In other words, we must first situate ourselves before moving forward. This means what I have said many times that we must start from reality, from facts. The most important fact today is that human society is going through cultural shifts in its transition from the twentieth to the twenty-first century.

In 1989, I attended an international conference on childhood education. I said that the most important task in children's education is to prepare them to adapt to life in the twenty-first century. And what will the twenty-first century be like? For that, we need to start with the twentieth century. I once used the analogy that the twenty-first century will be a worldwide "Warring States Period," in the sense that many disparate, separate cultural groupings will eventually coalesce to form a cultural community, an international community of diversity within integration. I believe that human culture is moving toward such a community. The Warring States Period in China (475–221 BC) was characterized by a struggle toward integration,

[14] Bronislaw K. Malinowski, *A Scientific Theory of Culture*, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1944.

and I think that's what is happening now in the world. We are on the cusp of such an integration. We must recognize this general direction and work toward it by creating the right conditions. If not, and if wars keep on breaking out, someday some crazy person might just throw an atomic bomb and destroy us all. Even if humanity is not totally wiped out, culture will have to start all over again. That's why to avoid this, we must first find a way to live together, to coexist peacefully, and then to go one step further, to cooperate for a peaceful common culture, which will include both diversity and integration.

I won't live to see that day, but I can imagine this Greater Harmony under Heaven, and I still want to do something now to help realize such an encouraging prospect. That's why I have been thinking of "matters after death." Just because I am going to die soon does not mean the future is not my concern anymore. That's not how we Chinese think. I might be gone soon, but culture will remain, mankind will remain, and people will continue to live on the planet, and so the problems will remain too. We need solutions. We have a responsibility to think of these things for the sake of those who will come after us. We need to prepare, but how? If we wish to build a world cultural community, then first of all we must know how many different cultural groupings there are, what they are like, and what is key to their peaceful coexistence. And that's where we can refer back to Malinowski. In *The Dynamics of Culture Change*, he comes to a conclusion that we can still build upon today, which is that mankind needs a common, agreed-upon interest first before cultures can progress from exchanging to blending. He drew this important conclusion from what he saw in the African colonies. In other words, colonialism could not compel cultures to coexist. We Chinese say "to govern by force is hegemony, to govern by reason is benevolence." A world united by hegemony will not last long; benevolence and reason will bring all peoples together and create harmony. Hegemony may lead to nuclear war and wipe us all out. I want to avoid that; I want harmony; which is why on my 80th birthday, I proposed "each appreciates its own best, each appreciates the best of others, all appreciate the best together, to build greater harmony for all."

Peking University
June 15, 1998

Part III

Chapter 8
Thoughts on the Historical and Social Nature of Culture

Two years ago at the 7th Forum on Modernization and Chinese Culture, I said that it was probably the last time I would be attending this series of meetings, yet here I am at the 8th Forum, which just goes to show I was wrong. However, I still have the same feeling: a sense of urgency because, for a person my age, life is short but culture is long. I suppose being here to present my ideas is a good way of blending my limited lifespan into this timeless stream.

My colleagues here today all know the origin of this forum. Thinking back over the 20 years since the first one convened, I really feel the pressure of passing time, which has slipped by so fast there's never enough for those who crave knowledge. The seemingly simple name of this forum expresses everything that I have encountered, pondered, and worked for in my academic career. Starting from the 1930s, I have spent the last 60–70 years working on and asking questions about this very issue of modernization and Chinese culture. I can't say I have achieved a great deal, only that I have done the best I could. In the last decade, I went from being 80 to 90. It occurred to me that, while I am still alive and have a clear mind, I should take a closer look at everything I have written over the years and do some summing up; so since 1993, I started writing a number of longer papers that are all part of this process. Allow me here to continue what I consider to be an important task, by once again discussing some of the issues I have been reconsidering.

The relationship between modernization and our national culture has been a long-standing and important issue for Chinese intellectuals, starting with my own teachers all the way down to all of us, myself included. In the first years of the twenty-first century, this relationship has manifested itself in new forms, with profound effects all over the world. A few years ago, as the new century approached and cultural studies took on added significance, I proposed the concept of "cultural self-awareness" where I said Chinese intellectuals should take the initiative in understanding and situating their own culture, at the same time as understanding

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other cultures, so as to assume the task of cross-cultural dialogue. At the centenary of Nanjing University last year, I gave a talk about this under the title of "Rethinking the Relationship Between Man and Nature in Culture Theory."[1] I pointed out that different cultures view the relationship between man and nature very differently. Given the great influence on modern society of the Western cultural worldview of "man versus nature," I proposed the need for a readjustment of values, that is, if we are to eliminate the cultural conflicts that plague us today, we need to recognize the limitations of this dichotomous outlook and that to avoid the "man-as-center" worldview closely associated with it, we must examine and understand the distinctive historical and social nature of Chinese culture. Here I would like to present my rather rough ideas for your comments.

Over the last century, Western scholars have studied the non-Western cultures of Asia, Africa, Latin America, and the Pacific region and have already noted the historical and social natures of these civilizations. These two features are particularly pronounced in Chinese culture. Spread over a vast territory stretching from the mountains across wide plains to the sea, Chinese society has evolved from early hunting and fishing to a farming culture with deep roots in the soil. It used to be said that the northern Yellow River basin was the birthplace of Chinese rural society. However, I have visited the Hemudu site in central Zhejiang province (archaeologists claim it is representative of the more southerly Yangtze River Delta culture) which dates back over 7,000 years; the Liangzhu Culture sites around Lake Taihu also go back 5,000 years. They were all quite advanced and sophisticated societies, using the plow, planting rice, and weaving cloth. Further excavation has shown that these two southern cultures already had sound economic foundations that provided the basic conditions for life and supported a settled rural way of living. From this, we can say that, thousands of years ago, a strong rural, land-based culture was widespread in both the northern and southern regions of the Chinese territory. Rural society is characterized by a stable economic foundation rooted in farming; it is self-sufficient with a complete lifestyle of its own which is why it has lasted for thousands of years, passed down through the generations in an unbroken chain. This distinctive history is also reflected in the spiritual aspect of our traditions. Ever since Confucius (551–479 BC), Chinese society has emphasized mutual consideration and empathy, and its focus has always been "this-worldly," rather than what happens to the soul after death. This does not mean that we Chinese do not search for some connection between life and death, only that, unlike Westerners, we do not separate the dead into another time and space, but instead attempt to find some kind of continuity between the two states. This makes up the social nature of Chinese culture.

Its historical nature, on the other hand, is rooted in its system of kinship. Chinese society is based on the continuity between ancestor and descendant, where the individual is only one link in a long chain of those who came before and those who will come after. In my book *Reproductive Systems*,[2] I pointed out that this was one of the

[1] In Chinese, *Wenhua lun zhong ren yu ziran guanxi de zairenshi* (《文化论中人与自然关系的再认识》).

[2] In Chinese, *Shengyu zhidu* (《生育制度》), Shanghai: The Commercial Press, 1947.

distinctive features of Chinese culture. Writing in the mid-twentieth century, Mr. Liang Shuming,[3] in his outstanding work contrasting Chinese and Western cultures, examined from a macro perspective the differences between Chinese ancestor worship and Christian monotheism and their social repercussions. My fellow anthropologist, the now deceased Xu Langguang, used material from many ethnographic studies in his work *Under the Ancestors' Shadow*[4] to show how the belief in the importance of continuing the family bloodline permeates the rituals of ancestor worship in daily life and how this confers a historical nature on the kinship system. All this makes for a better understanding of why the ancient Chinese did not need religion. Their unique philosophy of life included a belief in the continuance of the family line from ancestors down to descendants, and this replaced other religious beliefs. For us Chinese, our lifespan is like a gift in time, a brief period granted to each of us, yet is not our private possession. This is because, though a human being is first and foremost a biological entity, by creating culture with values, actions, and words that are passed on, the individual transcends the limitations of biological life. Through ideas, deeds, and words, he or she can win social recognition, contribute to communal life, express personal views, and thus in one sense live on after biological death.

It is in this specific context that Chinese culture has both a historical and a closely related social nature. A person is born into a group, a so-called social structure. From the moment of birth, he is a member of this group, and as he grows through childhood to adulthood, he becomes a social being. "Becoming part of society" means accepting a cultural system that existed before he was born. People must live together and get to know and understand one another. This commonly accepted system of behavior constitutes the culture of this society. Should this culture no longer keep up with changes in reality, then something new will emerge. The process by which biological man becomes social man involves learning and imitation. Dissatisfaction with imitation leads to creativity, and when an individual's innovations are accepted by society, they become part of the group's knowledge, transcending the individual to be absorbed into the long-lasting culture. Chinese culture changes, and it cannot forever just copy what previous generations did. Culture is dynamic and expanding, transforming and innovating. The individual is a vehicle for culture but is also transformed by its continuous innovations. Individuals communicate with each other, and the effects of this are not just limited to their relationship alone, but by contributing to collective creativity become part of the social consensus. This is how the individual participates in creating general culture.

Similar to their belief in "harmony between man and nature," the Chinese also believe that "individual–group–consensus (including language, meaning, and

[3] 1893–1988, prominent thinker, philosopher, social activist, educator, scholar of classical Chinese culture, one of the early Neo-Confucianists.

[4] Francis L. K. Hsu (1909–1999), *Under the Ancestors' Shadow—Kinship, Personality, and Social Mobility in China* (in Chinese, *Zuyin xia—Zhongguo xiangcun de qinshu, renge yu shehui liudong* 《祖荫下: 中国乡村的亲属、 人格与社会流动》), Taipei: Nantian Bookstore, 2001. The English translation was published by Stanford University Press in 1967.

response)," or put another way "man–society–culture," is an interconnected organic whole and not separate distinct subjects or objects. Traditional Chinese thinking considers culture to be a link that must be both maintained and transformed. Culture can be said to be created by each individual's lifelong differential modes of association.[5] People live and die at different times, creating overlapping existences, but their lives and deaths are all linked by a common web of culture. An individual's thoughts, deeds, and words do not belong to him alone but, through his actions, enter into the texture of the society and culture and so live on after him. Without society's acceptance, culture cannot survive; to be shared and passed on requires language and eventually writing. These both follow rules that can be deciphered if they are forgotten, and so culture can be revived and live again. That is in fact what archaeologists do: decipher and revive the past. Culture has its own history yet also transmits history, and it has patterns of development, often expressed in the term "national spirit." When members of a society look back on their personal past, they are hoping that they will in turn become part of the wider culture. Ancestors and descendants are connected by a stream of culture; human reproduction is not limited to biological procreation alone but also includes the continuation of culture.

In the course of their practical experience, the Chinese people have come to understand that man develops his social nature through the continuity of culture, and this concept has lain at the heart of Chinese social thought and practice. Confucius (551–479 BC) laid out four subjects for education: letters, ethics, devotion of soul, and truthfulness (*wen*, *xing*, *zhong*, *xin*).[6] By "letters" he meant historical documents, "ethics" practice in social life, "devotion of soul" loyalty, and "truthfulness" living up to one's word.[7] Confucius said he liked "the ancient" (*gu*), by which he meant not only the reexamination of historical facts but also an ideal of civilized order. This order was to be made real by educating in the four areas of *wen*, *xing*, *zhong*, and *xin*, and these four characters epitomize what I mean by the historical and social nature of culture.

Confucius was a great thinker, and what he did was to bring together everything in the cultural system of meaning that had evolved gradually in even more ancient times before him. At a higher level, this civilized order manifested itself in "ritual action" (*li*),[8] which was different from ordinary laws and rules, because it placed value on "harmony," i.e., doing things in the most appropriate way. "Ritual action" does not mean ignoring laws and rules, but aims at achieving order through actual behavior, hence the term "etiquette" (*lijie*) which means doing things appropriately. Of course, "ritual action" is a restriction of individual freedom. However, traditional Chinese, schooled in "ritual action," are not as bothered by the notion as Westerners. Instead, by following "etiquette in things small and great," they seek to create a

[5] Described in detail in Fei Xiaotong, *From the Soil* (English translation of *Xiangtu zhongguo* 《乡土中国》), University of California Press, Berkeley, 1992.

[6] D. Hall and R. Ames, *Thinking Through Confucius,* New York: State University of New York Press, 1987, p. 60.

[7] *Ibid*.

[8] *Ibid.*, p. 86.

society of "exemplary people" (*junzi*) who possess "righteousness" (*yi*). In a society organized around "ritual action," great weight is given to "discipline of the self" or self-restraint (*keji*). Confucius said, "To discipline oneself and practice ritual action is to become authoritative as a person."[9]

From the earliest Qin dynasty in the third century BC all the way up until the latter part of the Qing dynasty in the nineteenth century, Chinese cultural interpretations of social being have profoundly influenced politics and the regulation of social behavior. In antiquity, there was the saying that "ritual action" was not for the common people, so the "civilized order" created by it was only to be enjoyed by the upper classes. Through the ages, subsequent generations of intelligentsia have revisited this narrow interpretation, and by the Song (960–1279) and Ming (1369–1644) dynasties, it had evolved into a "humanist spirit for all under Heaven" according to which the "civilized order" applied to everyone. Those living in these later times understood very well that the philosophies of "ritual action (*li*) and "benevolence" (*ren*) had penetrated deeply into the Chinese psyche, infusing meaning to life, guiding daily behavior, and underpinning all aspects of social activity. Living as we do in such an environment without the opportunity to contrast it with other civilizations means that in fact we probably do not have a very clear understanding of its many cultural meanings.

Modernization and traditional culture are often seen as opposites. Yet the notion of "cultural self-awareness" was born in a century that has pursued modernization.

In the past 100 years or so, the huge changes that have taken place all over the world are confronting us with problems rarely encountered before. At the 7th Forum, I talked about China's "double leap": from rural to industrial society and then from industrial to the information society. In this latter, interpersonal relationships have changed radically. Electronic media used to transmit and communicate information are altering modes of industrial production and commerce, even how governments regulate; in fact it is affecting social life in general. This is having a huge impact on the traditional human world. Industrialization and the information age all began in the West, thanks to the development of natural sciences and technology, and since the nineteenth century, the phenomenon and process of what we term "modernization" has greatly affected people everywhere. Many Western anthropologists believe that Western civilization possesses a powerful "rupturing" force that repeatedly breaks the social nature of both history and life, representing what they call a "hot," "dynamic" social model that collides with "cold," "continuous" traditional cultures like China's, which value the role of historical continuity in the creation of culture.

This description of the new cultural order is generally accurate and can explain why "hot" and "cold" societies, through cultural comparison, have both begun their respective self-reflections. When my generation started to study anthropology and sociology, intellectual circles in the West had already begun to reexamine their civilization from the perspective of "the other." Bronislaw Malinowski, one of my professors, wrote a great deal about this and expounded his theory of culture. He

[9] *Op. cit.* D. Hall and R. Ames.

proposed that civilizations should be studied within their own living contexts and rejected the nineteenth-century classical anthropological view that non-Western cultures were "backward."

Professor Malinowski's views had certain limitations, but he called for reexamining the worldwide "mainstream" modern Western culture. This line of thought is worth pursuing. The functional theory, born within Western academia, is unavoidably constrained by Western epistemology. Malinowski proposed that all cultures exist to satisfy human needs. However, this was criticized by later anthropologists who said his theory treated "culture as a tool" and that his explanations supported the Western cultural approach of separating man from matter and goal from means. If this is indeed the case, I believe it was unintentional. Malinowski wanted to point out that Western culture, as it shook up, influenced and changed the whole world and should not claim to be the only cultural form with practical meaning. The mission of anthropologists, he believed, was to point out that non-Western cultures whose ways superficially showed no purpose of conquering nature were in fact rational manifestations emanating from local life experiences. Some have criticized Malinowski for being strongly "anti-history," but what he rejected was the Western-centered "tiered" view of history prevalent before his theories and not the kind of historical continuity that I talked about above. In his works, I see a respect for non-Western cultures and their historical and practical roles.

The anthropologists of Malinowski's generation initiated a new era of "cultural sciences." Today the term "modern social anthropology" is generally used to describe cultural theories that explicitly reject a Western-centered perspective. As I try to catch up in this field, I have reread a number of works over the past few years and taken many notes. I have observed an admirable effort over the last decades by Western anthropologists to gradually search for a cultural conscience. However, things were very different before.

Allow me to go back in time to before the twentieth century to see what Westerners said about Chinese culture then. It is true that during the European Enlightenment, there were intellectuals who admired Chinese civilization and attempted to find in it inspiration for European cultural renewal. However, we must also remember that, at the start of the eighteenth century, as China and the West came into more frequent contact and as Western expansion spreads worldwide, disdain for the East became more and more pronounced. During the Ming dynasty (1368–1644), European missionaries attempted to gain a foothold in China and made specific efforts to learn Confucian etiquette and rituals. Even the British delegation to the early Qing dynasty court, the Macartney Mission, had to accept the demands of the Qing emperor to genuflect for the imperial audience and followed court protocol to "pay tribute." However, later, this "cultural humility" disappeared rapidly as Western military and economic might increased. Starting in the eighteenth century and right up until the nineteenth, the Holy See expressed doubts about whether Chinese "ritual action" (*li*) conformed to norms of civilized society. Within the church the "Chinese Rites Controversy" raged for decades, centered on whether or not Chinese ancestor worship was in line with church teachings. In the second half of the nineteenth century, biological evolution gradually came to dominate

social thinking in the West. Many intellectuals drew upon the conclusions of biologists' research into evolution to assess and position Western and non-Western cultures. China was classified under "ancient Asiatic social formations." Our civilization became one of the examples by which Westerners came to know about the ancient history of mankind. Over the centuries, their views about Chinese culture have shifted and changed, but they have followed a path worth noting: evolving from a "land of traditions" hotly debated by the church into a stagnant "ancient Asiatic social formation" to be investigated by social scientists.

Western Oriental studies, world history studies, and social science research have all examined Chinese civilization, some from a more humanistic perspective and others from a natural science one. However, all perspectives looked at Chinese culture in terms of a world governed by matter and tools. Toward the end of the Qing dynasty (1644–1911), the Reform Movement began to gather pace in China. An important step was the introduction of Western culture, which made our people realize the great value of matter and tools. A popular expression of the time was still "Chinese learning for the basics and Western learning for practical use," with the literati both desiring and disdaining the new ideas of "use." However, once the floodgates were opened, Western culture rushed in like an overwhelming tide and, over the first two decades of the twentieth century, became widely accepted and even revered in Chinese intellectual circles in the forms of "Mr. De (Democracy)" and "Mr. Sai (Science)."

In the first half of the twentieth century, comparisons between Chinese and Western culture were a popular and hotly debated topic among the Chinese intelligentsia. The cultural interaction was described variously as "total Westernization," "holding on to our own," and "finding a middle way." However, as Western ideas spread, modern ideas gradually began to take root in China.

My own education began in the new system of the time. I attended "Western schools" which were set up to replace the old private family tutoring that prepared students for the imperial examinations. The new schools had come to China via Japan. Those of my generation were educated from early years in these institutions where we studied in same-age classes and used modern textbooks instead of the classics like the *Confucian Analects* or *The Works of Mencius*. From the 1930s on, I entered the world of academia and the field of social anthropology. My interests have always been on the developments of my own traditional culture, and I have tried to follow the teachings of my professor Mr. Wu Wenzao, who advocated employing the methods of Western social anthropology to create a Chinese school of sociology. Specifically, this meant using the positivist methods of modern Western social science to examine visible, concrete, and objective phenomena in China to discover the essence of culture.

My own educational background includes my family upbringing that stressed the new Western ideas and later the methods of sociology and anthropology. These have built into me a habit of "pragmatic creativity." In my research I have employed positivist methodologies that emphasize the biological individual so important in Western culture. The theory of culture I learned from Professor Malinowski examined the details of daily life, i.e., the whole social system of existence, and stressed

that it was man's efforts to change the natural world that eventually led to the human world. In this theory, the focus is on "by man" and "for man," that is, culture is created by man and serves the needs of man, of real, physical people. In the early part of the twentieth century, Chinese culture needed to reform and change, as dictated by the laws of human development, and this did occur gradually as China encountered more of the outside world. The subsequent waves of cultural reform focused on "pragmatic creativity," valued the practical and the innovative, and sought to compensate for the traditional overemphasis on the human at the expense of matter. Special stress was also laid on "the self," that is, on individual freedom.

To this day, I believe that modern intellectuals should continue the spirit of "pragmatic creativity." Those who study social sciences must participate in and observe real life, so as to develop their own ideas and concepts to add to human knowledge; otherwise, I see very little value in their research. However, they must not forget to reflect upon their observations and their epistemology. The cultural theory of "by man" and "for man" rejected the Western social evolutionism of the nineteenth century, but at the same time, in which I have noticed, abandoned Darwin's important idea of man as an integral part of the natural world. Instead, it adopted a dualist view of man and nature, completely separating humans from matter in a utilitarian way and defining man as a purely biological being without a social or historical existence. Unfortunately, this view of man devoid of history, culture, or society has spread with "globalization" to all parts of the world and is considered to be universally true.

Personally, I have nothing against the concept of "globalization." After all, humans must all share this single planet. Future challenges may actually come more from outer space than mankind itself. In addition, today's "globalization" is different from the imperialism of the past, since it welcomes different cultures' participation and influence. However, we must not think that "globalization" is just a couple of decades old or that it will automatically result in countries, nations, or cultures "appreciating the best together" and "building greater harmony for all."

In fact, today's "globalization" is a continuation of the worldwide encounters between various cultures that began in the nineteenth century. To this day, there is still an imbalance between these cultures. The many events of the past century should be a warning, prodding the stronger cultures to reflect on themselves, but unfortunately this has not happened enough. Cultural differences may now indeed receive more respect thanks to increased contacts through tourism and other activities, and within mainstream culture, "harmony between man and nature" is more widely accepted than before. Regrettably, however, in spite of this, violence still breeds violence and is a preferred method employed by those with ambitions to "conquer the world." In this twentieth century that I have described as a "worldwide Warring States Period," individuals have been "freed" from their narrow communities to directly deal with a growing modern nation, thus replacing one set of restrictions by another. I think in the twenty-first century, individuals will be further "freed" from their nation to face the whole wide world, which is not necessarily any better.

The imbalance of power will continue to be a major tension for mankind for a long time ahead. Particularly serious is the "globalization" of the "me-centered" way of treating others and the "man versus nature" way of looking at the world. The challenge facing anthropologists and sociologists is how to contribute to building an "order based on ritual action." I continue to believe in "pragmatic creativity" for the social sciences and that it will help in the search for solutions.

Over the last few years, I have been looking over my previous writings and also catching up on other readings. I have noted that Western science has encountered issues in its development that are well worth our pondering. In one of my recent books *Legacy, Catching Up, Learning*,[10] I wrote an article on how Professor Robert E. Park[11] became a sociologist and how the science of sociology evolved in the United States. After World War I, Park began thinking about how sociology could become more "scientific" and also focused his research on human relationships. The United States was one of the earliest to acquire scientific knowledge of man and natural matter, such as in physics, chemistry, and especially in the more advanced biological sciences. At the time, sociology and anthropology were lumped into one large field examining man, society, and culture because, culture being born from the relationship between man and matter, most prominent Western sociologists believed that the study of man should not disconnect his biological and natural state from his social and cultural environment. However, the long-held Western epistemology of "man versus nature" had resulted in a separation between the natural and social sciences. Park frequently pointed out that it was because the social sciences lacked the study of "signs" and "the mind" that they were unscientific. And why were these aspects that Park wished to examine not included in sociology? Basically because of the belief in "man versus nature," which resulted in the fragmentation of the humanities and social sciences into many separate fields of study. The new generation of social theorists has also realized that this fragmentation of the humanities in Western countries since the nineteenth century has a close bearing on their domestic national organization and their international politics. Two primary characteristics emerged: the division of knowledge into separate disciplines and the belief of "the West-as-center." It is now acknowledged that to overcome the shortcomings of both, it is necessary to draw upon integrated theories of culture and to formulate alternative perspectives that examine cultural similarities as well as differences.

In the development of the Western social sciences, the concepts emerging from natural science research have always been extremely influential. The earliest social science was called "social physics" and aspired to apply the principles of physics to human society. Today's widely used term of "structure" comes from physics. Since the nineteenth century, biology has also become an increasingly important part of the study of man. We all know that physical anthropology has borrowed a great deal from biology and genetics. In social and cultural research, terms like "social organism"

[10] In Chinese, *Shi cheng, buke, zhixue* (《师承·补课·治学》), Beijing: Joint Publishing Company, 2001.

[11] Robert E. Park (1864–1944), American urban sociologist, one of the most influential figures in American sociology.

and "cultural organism" once filled Western academic discourse. I do not object to the application of concepts of natural science to social science, all I am saying is that we must recognize that Western social science has very specific cultural and historical reasons for applying methods used on the natural world to the human world. Previously I have said that "use things to the utmost" is a key concept in Western culture. This seems to have a very strong humanistic flavor, since the subject is man, and the object is "things." In fact, it is precisely this kind of division into subject and object that has caused Western epistemology to one-sidedly stress the opposition between man and nature. If Malinowski's theories have any weakness, it is precisely this adversarial relationship between man and the things that serve man.

As Western culture's influence spreads around the world and societies modernize, the "man versus nature" worldview will have a growing impact on human existence. At the same time, the issue of cultural blending is coming to the fore in the twenty-first century, and this will mean more cultures will "bump heads." How can different cultures preserve their unique features while coexisting with others? This issue needs wider attention. As for us, our understanding of our own Chinese culture over the past century leaves a great deal to be desired. In the course of modernization, we lost confidence in our culture and made choices and decisions at the time that were not in our national interests. This is an important issue that we must reexamine. It falls within the purview of cultural research, since these problems emerged when China first encountered the West and became more pronounced toward the end of the Qing dynasty.

Many practical issues lie before us in the new century, all needing more study and thought. I hope the new generation will take over the baton and carry on, but of course that will not be enough: several generations are required. Starting with Confucius, then since the Qin (221–207 BC) and Han (202 BC–220 AD) dynasties, we forgot about "matter/things." Then toward the end of the Qing dynasty, we gradually "focused only on matter to the exclusion of man." The twenty-first century requires a humanistic thinking that places equal importance on man and matter. I have given considerable thought to this issue over the past 10 years, and I would like to present some ideas for your discussion.

In 1993, at the 4th Forum on Modernization and Chinese Culture, I presented a paper entitled "Individual, Group and Society"[12] in which I reflected on all my previous theoretical work on the subject. I describe two different concepts on the nature of "society." In the first, I suggest that society is an aggregate of individuals, each one a living biological being, a separate entity within the group whose communal behavioral norms and other "cultural" man-made objects serve as tools for the individual. In the second, I suggest that though the aggregate is indeed made up of individuals, they are no longer merely separate biological beings but instead are also members of an organized group, that is, they are social beings. Here, biological man becomes the vehicle for society, while the society itself is the real entity.

Theoretically speaking, these two concepts are quite different: one sees society merely as a means by which the individual learns how to live within the group; the

[12] In Chinese, *Geren, qunti, shehui* (《个人, 群体, 社会》).

other considers society itself to be on a higher level than a group of purely biological beings. In my experience and empirical research, I have encountered both concepts, and at different periods I have had different insights and understandings, but I have never had the chance to ponder them systematically. Thus, my "self-reflection" in 1993 was a kind of review of my thinking at different periods of my life. Toward the end of my article, I summarized my understanding of Mr. Pan Guangdan's ideas of the new humanism of "social adjustment" (*zhonghe weiyu*) which represents my current thinking as discussed above. This has led me to conclude that research into communities should not stop at their "social structures," but should go one step further into probing the thoughts and mentalities of their living members, to do what I call "mentality research." I also note that we generations of Chinese, living in so many communities scattered over this vast land and with such a long history behind us, have accumulated incredibly rich experiences of human relationships thanks to the ancient teachings of "social adjustment." These have come down to us not only in the many writings we have inherited, but must surely also be preserved and expressed in the lived existence of people today. They deserve to be "rediscovered" and reviewed.

In 1995, I gave a talk "Learning Culture Theory from Professor Malinowski"[13] at the Advanced Workshop on Socio-cultural Anthropology organized by the Institute of Sociology and Anthropology of Peking University. I highlighted what I think is the most important basic concept in Malinowski's *A Scientific Theory of Culture*, namely, that culture is created by man's processing the natural world to further his needs for life and reproduction. Man is a product of nature and, through his interaction with other products of nature, creates the human world or culture. This processed world is different from the natural world, but is none the less a part of it. I believe that Malinowski's basic theory of culture can be traced back to Darwin's theory of biological evolution. Most importantly he had found the "missing link" between culture and nature and, by seeing culture as an integration of matter, society, and spirit, brought the human world back into the natural one where it became a verifiable entity. In the article, I pointed out that this theory of culture has actually long existed in China.

A. R. Radcliffe-Brown (1881–1955), the equally well-known anthropologist, once said that the ancestor of sociology was our Chinese philosopher Xunzi (313–238 BC). Radcliffe-Brown reminded us that in Chinese traditional culture, the human world has always been very important. He was an anthropologist but called himself a sociologist. He believed that the greatest creation of the human world was society, as amply demonstrated in China's ancient traditions. In once sense, Radcliffe-Brown's references to Xunzi's ideas brought social anthropology closer to what I mean here by the social nature of culture. However, he also frequently used the concept of "structure" to describe society, which shows he was also influenced by the ideas of "social physics." Only later, when he talks about "rituals" does he adopt more perspectives from Chinese culture, but he is not systematic.

[13] In Chinese, *Cong Malinnuosiji laochi xuexi wenhua lun* (《从马林诺斯基老师学习文化论》).

With its emphasis on the natural world, Western culture initiated the technological revolution, which has dominated for over 300 years. There is no doubt that the human world is built on the natural one, yet it would be dangerous to see only the natural world. In order to clarify this point, in 1997 I proposed the concept of "cultural self-awareness" at the 2nd Advanced Workshop on Socio-cultural Anthropology organized by the Institute of Sociology and Anthropology of Peking University. I believe that at the present time the whole world needs this kind of self-understanding and that it is not the subjective whim of just one individual. All scholars of society and culture are naturally concerned with the pressing problems we face today, which is why in my old age, I am calling for "cultural self-awareness" in the hope that everyone will take this seriously and reexamine our own long history in a factual, positivist way. After all, as we enter the twenty-first century, we can already see the consequences of not learning from the past.

Cultural self-awareness means that those living in a specific culture must "know themselves," understand the origins of their culture, how it has formed, its distinctive features, and its development trends. This is not "cultural regression," or "restoring the past," nor is it "total Westernization" or "becoming the other." "Knowing oneself" is necessary in order to be more conscious of what is happening in the process of cultural transformation, to be able to make considered choices when adapting to the new cultural environments of the times. Cultural self-awareness is a long and arduous process. It means first understanding one's own culture, then understanding all the other cultures one encounters, and then being able to establish one's own place in the multicultural world that is forming. Through conscious adaptation, one must then go through a process of learning from each other in order to create a basic order that all can identify with, as well as the conditions in which all cultures may coexist peacefully, build on their strengths, and work together for development.

"Cultural self-awareness" is also an expression of my desire to better understand the distinctive features of Chinese civilization. This requires a closer look into the unique Chinese concept of "nature and man" (*tianren guan*) and its possible contribution to peaceful coexistence between different cultural traditions. Last year, at the centenary of Nanjing University, I gave a talk on "Rethinking the Relationship Between Man and Nature in Culture Theory" in which I pointed out the huge difference in cosmological thinking between the East and the West. The Western tradition of "man versus nature" has combined with modern egoistic values to have a deep effect on the lives of people everywhere. From a historical perspective, the concept has indeed propelled Western culture into its present dominance and has promoted modern development in many non-Western countries as well. However, I am concerned that now things are going to an extreme that will lead to ecological problems and cultural tensions. Personally, I believe that the West's emphasis on man's exploitation of nature differs from Eastern traditions and that this in fact points to the importance of Chinese culture's preoccupation with "harmony between man and nature" (*tianren heyi*). Myself, I did not have a traditional Chinese education and lack a basic grounding in Eastern cultures. So at the age of 90, I decided to make up for these deficiencies, and one of the areas I have been studying is the history of

Chinese culture. This highly complex field is quite unfamiliar to me. Before I began delving into it, I had, over the past 50 years, employed Western positivist research methods to carry out my investigations into communities. In the 1990s, as I began to look back over my work, I gradually discovered the ethnographic method in the functionalist theories of culture within social anthropology, which made me realize that I had not fulfilled Professor Malinowski's hope that I would develop "the study of more advanced cultures." In order to make up this gap in my knowledge, I read a number of works on sociology theory, as well as works on the history of culture. I took note of the works of Mr. Qian Mu, my compatriot from the neighboring county of Wuxi, and particularly of his analysis of the differences between Confucian thought and Eastern/Western cultures. These have greatly helped me in my thinking on "cultural self-awareness."

I do not imply that sociologists and anthropologists should study the history of culture, as I am doing now at this late age. However, I see clearly the deficiencies of the Western "man versus nature" thinking that has dominated sociology for so long. The Chinese philosophical tradition particularly stresses the notion of "supreme ultimate" (*taiji*), which can be understood as the ultimate state of "harmony between man and nature" when the two fuse into one. We have always disagreed with the notion of unrestrained "use" of matter by man in his relations with nature and instead advocated "social adjustment," described by Mr. Pan Guangdan as man finding his appropriate place in nature, history, and society. This tendency to search for "the middle way" (*zhongyong*) and make "one into two" (*yi er er*) and "two into one" (*er er yi*) may be difficult to achieve, but is in line with Confucian ideals of Greater Harmony (*datong*). I firmly believe that this different attitude toward man and nature could be constructive for cultural diversity in this globalizing world and could help to avoid cultural clashes that might end up destroying us all.

The humanities and social sciences will enter a new era in the next 20 or 30 years. There is a growing respect for their achievements and scientific status, and they are increasingly looking into the consequences and effects of natural science and technology research. In light of a number of international incidents over the last years, the social sciences must now seriously reflect on how the natural sciences are really serving mankind. By this I don't mean we do not need the natural sciences, all I am saying is that in the twenty-first century, the widely influential Western-centric bias of "man versus nature" must and can be corrected and that in this process Chinese cultural researchers have a new role to play.

November 2003

Chapter 9
Diversity Within Integration

At the invitation of the Chinese University of Hong Kong, I am here today to deliver the Tanner Lecture. I consider this to be an excellent opportunity to present to you a number of my ideas on the concept of diversity within integration of the Chinese nation that I have been pondering for a number of years. I hope the many scholars here today will honor me with their comments. I have to say frankly though that my understanding of the subject is still not deep enough, so my talk today will only present some initial thoughts that have yet to become a well-structured theory.

To avoid the need for long explanations, I here use the term "Chinese nation" to mean the over one billion people possessing a common sense of national identity who live within the borders of present-day China. The 50-odd ethnic groups of this huge population comprise the diversity, while the Chinese nation as a whole constitutes the integration. Though each "ethnic group" possesses a particular identity, these are not on the same level as the overall national identity. My use of the national boundaries of China to define the Chinese nation is not totally appropriate since the concepts of state and nation, though related, are also distinct. However, I define them in this way for both convenience and to avoid political argument. From a macro point of view, they pretty much overlap.

The Chinese nation's conscious sense of a national entity only took shape over the last century or so, in the course of its violent confrontation with the West. However, a de facto national entity had already evolved over the course of thousands of years. In this paper, I will retrace how this diversity within integration came about through the gradual coalescing of many scattered and isolated ethnic and cultural units. This process included contact, mixing, diffusion and assimilation, separation and dying out, countless movements, and displacements, all resulting in interpenetration leading to the formation of an integrated whole within which different ethnicities still continue to maintain their distinct identities. Nations the world over have probably all followed a similar process. In the case of China, a particular feature is that it began several thousands of years ago in the middle reaches of the Yellow River, where a number of ethnic groups first came together and gradually

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assimilated to form a core called Huaxia. This center gradually absorbed more and more of the peoples on its periphery, becoming larger and larger, like a snowball. By the time this culture had spread over the East China plain from the Yellow River to the lower reaches of the Yangtze River, its people had become known as the Han. Continuing growth and absorption of outside groups, as well as diffusion of the culture into neighboring ethnic areas, gradually formed a network that linked and bound the peoples together. This was the foundation on which many peoples were combined into a single indivisible entity to form a "de facto" national identity, later consciously recognized and called the "Chinese nation."

This is a rich and colorful historical process, unrolling like a scroll on two dimensions of time and space. Words are often unable to adequately describe it: in the space dimension, some things may be overlooked or misplaced, while in the time one, there may be overlap or reversal of order. I ask you today to see my paper as a bold attempt to discuss this gigantic topic.

9.1 The Space Dimension

All peoples must have a physical space in which to live and reproduce. The Chinese nation's "space" is situated in the eastern part of the Asian continent, bordered to the west by the Pamir Mountains, to the east by the islands of the Pacific, to the north by the vast Gobi Desert, to the southeast by the sea, and to the southwest by mountain ranges. This vast expanse has natural borders on all sides, and within it a complete cultural system developed linking all into a single geographical unit. In the minds of the ancients, this was the only place suitable for human habitation, so they called it "all under heaven" (*tianxia*), and since there were oceans on four sides, they also called it the land "within the four seas." This is now outdated, of course, but what has not changed is the fact that this is the space within which the Chinese nation has always existed.

Ethnic configurations always seem to correlate with the ecological systems of geography, and this applies equally to the Chinese nation. The vast land on which it lives slopes from west to east in a series of huge descending tiers. The first begins with the Qinghai-Tibetan "roof of the world" at over 4,000 m above sea level which merges with the Hengduan Mountains on its eastern flank; the second tier then drops to the Yunnan-Guizhou, the Loess, and the Mongolian Plateau, all at 1,000–2,000 m above sea level within which lie the Tarim and Sichuan Basins; and the third tier then descends even further to the hilly regions under 1,000 m and to the flat plains of the east at less than 200 m above sea level.

This three-tiered configuration stretches over 30° latitude from north to south. The differences in temperature and humidity of the different regions have created many distinct natural environments, which have provided rich opportunities for cultural growth while also setting severe limitations on it. These are the natural environments within which the Chinese nation has evolved.

9.2 From Many Sources

How did the earliest inhabitants live? Any answer naturally involves the origins of the Chinese nation. All peoples have creation stories, which often serve to underpin a sense of identity and belonging, but which may not be supported by factual historical evidence. For many years, there was debate over whether the Chinese nation sprang from one source or from many and whether it was "homegrown" or came from elsewhere. It was only in the 1950s, and more particularly since the archaeological finds of the 1970s, that we finally had the scientific evidence of the earliest times.

Over the years, fossilized remains from all the evolutionary stages of man have been unearthed in the Chinese land space, going from prehistoric *Pithecanthropus* (ape man) to Paleolithic man and to Neolithic man, showing that the vast land that makes up present-day China was probably also one of the places where mankind first originated.

This human fossil record is extremely widespread with the earliest Yuanmou man (dating back 1.7 Ma) discovered in Yunnan province. Other ape-man fossils have been unearthed in Lantian county of Shaanxi province, Zhoukoudian outside Beijing (Peking man), Yunxian and Yunxi counties in Hubei province, and Hexian in Anhui province. Fossils of Paleolithic man who lived between 100,000 and 40,00 years ago have been unearthed in Dali in Shaanxi province, Dingcun of Xiangfen county and Xujiayao in Yanggao county both in Shanxi province, Jinniushan in Yingkou county of Liaoning province, Changyang county in Hubei province, Chaoxian in Anhui province, and Maba in Qujiang county in Guangdong province. Fossilized remains of Neolithic man dating back between 40,000 and 10,000 years ago have been found in Zhoukoudian outside Beijing, Zhiyu in Shuoxian of Shanxi province, Wushen Banner in Inner Mongolia, Jianping county in Liaoning province, Antu county in Yanbian District of Jilin province, Harbin municipality in Heilongjiang province, Liujiang county in Guangxi, Xingyi county in Guizhou province, Lijiang county in Yunnan province, and Zuozhen in Tainan county in Taiwan. I cite this long list of places to show that early human culture was widely spread across the land, stretching from Heilongjiang in the north to Yunnan in the southwest to Taiwan in the east. All these centers of early human activity left stone implements behind as well. It is very hard to imagine that in those primitive times, such widely dispersed populations all originated from a single source. We can also be sure that each culture, living far apart from the others over long periods of time, had to adapt to very different natural environments. All this physical evidence means that the theories of a single or external source of the Chinese nation can be rejected in favor of multiple, indigenous sources.

If the above evidence is not persuasive enough, there is also rich data from the Neolithic Age to prove that by then there existed a number of areas with quite distinct local cultures. If we assume that the members of any one ethnic group usually possess certain cultural similarities, then we can deduce that by 6,000 BC, there were already many distinct population groups living in different parts of the territory.

These multiple Neolithic cultures constitute a starting point for our understanding of the diversity within integrity of the Chinese nation.

9.3 Neolithic Age Culture

Over the last years, some 7,000 Neolithic Age sites have been discovered all over China. They span a period from about 6,000 to 2,000 BC.

Though there are disagreements on a number of specific issues, generally speaking an overall profile of each cultural area has emerged that includes the attributes of the culture, its evolution, assimilation, and convergence. Here, I cannot go into the details of all the research, so I am focusing on the data from the Central Plains area.

In the Neolithic Age, there were two distinct cultural centers located to the east and west of the middle and lower reaches of the Yellow River.

In the middle reaches, the successive cultures were pre-Yangshao culture (c. 6000–5400 BC), Yangshao culture (c. 5000–3000 BC), and Longshan culture of Henan province (c. 2900–2000 BC), probably succeeded by the Xia dynasty (c. 2070–1660 BC). Yangshao culture is distinguished by its painted earthenware, so it is sometimes called the Painted Pottery culture.

Yangshao culture was centered on the Wei, Fen, and Luo tributaries of the Yellow River in the Central Plains. Its influence stretched northward as far as the line of the later Great Wall, southward to the northern regions of Hubei province, eastward to the eastern parts of Henan, and westward to the border regions of Gansu and Qinghai provinces. However, it had already begun to decline before the Longshan culture started to rise.

On the lower reaches of the Yellow River, another series of distinct cultures succeeded one another. First came Qinglian'gang culture (c. 5400–4000 BC), followed by Dawenkou culture (c. 4300–2,500 BC), Longshan culture of Shandong province (c. 2500–2000 BC), and Yuezhi culture (c. 1900–1500 BC). The Shang dynasty (1660–1300 BC) possibly came after this. Longshan culture is distinguished by its shiny black earthenware and so is also known as Black Pottery culture.

After the sudden decline in 3,000 BC of Yangshao culture in the middle reaches of the Yellow River, the culture of the lower reaches began to spread westward, and Longshan culture of Henan province appeared. Archaeologists believe that though the Longshan cultures of Shandong and Henan display a number of local differences, it is clear that they both absorbed and assimilated influences from the culture of the lower reaches.

Similarly, the middle and lower reaches of the Yangtze River also fostered two distinct cultural regions. The plain around Lake Taihu was at the center of the civilization in the lower reaches, which extended south to the Bay of Hangzhou and westward to the borders of Jiangsu and Anhui. The cultures that flourished here were Hemudu culture (c. 5000–4400 BC), Majiabang-Songze culture (c. 4300–3300 BC), and Liangzhu culture (c. 3300–2200 BC). This latter flourished during

the same period as Longshan culture in Henan province and shows close similarities with it.

In the middle reaches of the Yangtze River, the Neolithic cultures centered on the plain of Jiang-Han (Yangtze and Hanjiang Rivers), extending southward to include the plains of Dongting Lake up to the Three Gorges and northward to southern Henan. There are many disagreements about the series of cultures that succeeded each other here, but generally speaking they are as follows: Daxi culture (c. 4400–3300 BC), Qujialing culture (c. 3000–2000 BC), and Qinglongquan culture (c. 2400 BC) which came under the influence of central Longshan culture and so is also called Longshan culture of Hubei province. The civilizations of these two regions of the Yangtze River were both influenced in their later periods by the lower Yellow River Longshan culture and were generally weaker cultures.

I will talk later about the northern Yan-Liao Neolithic cultural region, as well as the cultures of the upper reaches of the Yellow River, and the South China cultural region.

The Neolithic archaeological record from the two plains in these regions of the Yellow and Yangtze Rivers where the ecology was similar shows that at the dawn of civilization between 5000 and 2000 BC, the earliest ancestors of the Chinese nation still lived in separate clusters scattered over the land, each creating its own distinctive culture. These are the origins of the diversity of the Chinese nation.

When the different cultures came in contact, comparisons led them to absorb each other's strengths while retaining their own features. For example, Yangshao culture flourished in the middle reaches of the Yellow River and at one point even spread westward to the upper reaches, yet when it encountered the superior Longshan culture of the lower reaches in Shandong province, it was superseded and became the Longshan culture of Henan province. For the sake of clarity, scientists add the province name to Longshan culture to indicate that each has grown out of its own local culture. This method of naming also highlights how interaction between the many tribes was gradually moving them from diversity toward integration.

9.4 Appearance of the Han People

China's earliest writing is now confirmed to be the oracle bone script of the Shang dynasty (c. 1600–c. 1046 BC). *The Shu King* (《尚书》), said to have been compiled by Confucius, recorded a number of texts and ancient legends from the Xia and Shang dynasties. Earliest historical texts divided ancient times into the reigns of the Five August Emperors (c. 3000–2100 BC) and the Three Sovereigns. Some of these traditional records have been confirmed by subsequent archaeological finds, so that today we have much more reliable information about the period extending from the end of the Neolithic up to the Bronze Age. In particular, the discovery in the early 1980s in Wangcheng gang at Dengfeng, Henan province, of some Xia dynasty (c. 2070–1600 BC) remains thought to be those of Yangcheng from the early years of the dynasty has produced physical evidence of that period formerly swathed in myth

and legend. Thus now the Shang dynasty's existence is proved by its oracle bone script and the Zhou (c. 1046–256 BC) by its bronze vessel script, and all subsequent dynasties have written historical records to prove their existence. The Xia, Shang, and Zhou dynasties were the long historical period over which the diverse and disparate Huaxia tribes gradually came together to form the Han people.

The artifacts unearthed at Bronze Age Yangcheng show clear signs of the influence of the more ancient Neolithic Longshan culture. Finds in sites on the lower reaches of the Yellow River also reveal that agriculture was already well established in these areas, thus confirming the legend of King Yu who managed the floods (during the late Longshan culture of Henan province) and testifying to the level of production of these early inhabitants. We also recall that Henan's Longshan culture was formed when Yangshao culture was absorbed by Shandong's Longshan culture, so we can say that Huaxia culture began with the fusion of the many cultures of the middle and lower reaches of the Yellow River.

Before the legendary Yu came Yao, Shun, and the mythical forefather Huangdi. Most of the stories that have come down to us today tell about their wars against the surrounding "barbarians." Huangdi defeated clan chiefs Chi You and Yandi at locations said to be in today's Henan province. Accounts in *The Records of the Grand Historian* (《史记》) from the Han dynasty tell how Shun exiled opposition clans and tribes to the regions of the barbarians in an attempt to change the latters' ways, a form of spreading the culture of the Central Plains. The *Chronicle of Zuo* (《左传》) says, "Yu gathered the nobles at Tushan, and bestowed jade tokens on them." The chapter *Yu Gong* in *The Shu King* calls this whole area Jiuzhou (the Nine Regions), covering the vast expanse between the middle and lower reaches of the Yellow River and the lower Yangtze. This formed the core of an increasingly powerful Huaxia tribe.

After the Xia came the Shang. These people were originally nomads from eastern Yi, who later migrated to Mount Tai and then moved westward into what is today the eastern part of Henan. Here they took up agriculture and used draft animals. The combination of farming and herding made them strong. Originally ruled by the Xia, they eventually took over the whole of Jiuzhou and set up the Shang dynasty. The land was divided into central, northern, southern, eastern, and western regions. In *Book of Poetry* (《诗经》), there is this verse: "A thousand *li* extends the king's domain, and there the people to repose are fain. Lo! to the four seas thence our border spread."[1] The Shang domain covered today's Henan, Shandong, Hebei, Liaoning, Shanxi, Shaanxi, Anhui, Jiangsu provinces, a part of Zhejiang, and possibly parts of Jiangxi, Hunan, and Inner Mongolia.

After the Shang came the Zhou. These people originated in the west, descended from the mythical Jiangyuan. Some believe they were an offshoot of the Xirong tribe. They were active in the upper reaches of the Wei River and received the name of Zhou from their Shang overlords. Later they took over from the Shang and expanded their rule to the lower reaches of the Yangtze River.

[1] From *Book of Poetry*, trans. James Legge, The Chinese Classics, vol. 4, Taipei: SMC Publishing Inc., 1991.

The *Book of Poetry* says, "Where'er their arch the heavens expand, the king can claim the land below. Within the sea-bounds of the land, all at his summons come or go."[2] The Zhou followed the patriarchal clan system, bestowing fiefdoms on royal clan members as a way of controlling their domain; they put in place the well-field (井田) system of land tenure which improved agriculture and boosted production. The Western Zhou lasted 300 years under a system of loose association, which eventually disintegrated into the competing fiefdoms of the Eastern Zhou's Spring and Autumn Period (770–476 BC) and then the Warring States Period (475–221 BC). Under the early loose association, each region had preserved its distinct cultural features. Xunzi[3] observed that even during the later Warring States Period, visitors to the states of Yue, Chu, or Xia still had to follow the distinct local customs, which shows that they still differed considerably from each other.

There is no doubt that over these 500 years there was considerable movement of populations and intermingling of cultures as the states vied with each other for supremacy. This was a high point in Chinese cultural history, a period in which the Han people as an ethnic entity gradually took shape. This period came to an end when the Qin conquered the last six states and united them into a single realm in 221 BC.

The term "Han" to designate a specific group of people first came into use during the Han dynasty (206 BC–AD 220) and later spread as a result of the mingling of the Central Plains populations with other ethnicities around them. Generally speaking, a people will name "the other" first before naming "the self." Members of a community with a similar way of living will have no clear sense of their own common identity until they come in contact with "outsiders." This encounter with "the other" fosters a conscious sense of "self." The Qin and Han peoples only called themselves such because other communities did. It is necessary to point out that an ethnic entity must first physically exist before it can be named, not the other way round.

The name "Han" could not have originated before the Han dynasty, but the physical population group itself must have formed prior to that. Some say the term actually came into use in the early years of the Northern and Southern Periods (420–589), which makes sense, as it was during the previous period of the fractured Sixteen States (304–439) after the Wei (220–280) and Jin (265–420) dynasties that large numbers of northern tribes entered the Central Plains, and the Han people who lived there came into contact and mixed with them. The term then became widely used as a designation of these original inhabitants of the Plains.

To the northern newcomers, these inhabitants had already formed a distinct "tribal grouping" which could be called by a single name, suggesting that by then the Han people had already developed their own ethnic entity. This long gestation process can be traced back to the Huaxia people 2,000 years earlier.

[2] *Ibid*.

[3] 313–238 BC, a major Confucian philosopher and writer.

The formation of the Han people was an important step in the evolution of the Chinese nation, as it became the cohesive core at the heart of the configuration of diversity within integration.

9.5 Regional Integration

The Emperor Qin Shihuang's unification of the Warring States in 221 BC was an epoch-making event in Chinese history, because from then on integration became the main historical trend. Of course, the unification he achieved was limited to the agricultural Central Plains between the middle and lower reaches of the Yellow and Yangtze Rivers and had been taking place gradually over centuries. During the Spring and Autumn and Warring States Periods (770–221 BC), there had been local economic development, roads had been built, and trade had grown. The struggle for hegemony between the six states had already established links across the region, and it was on this basis that Qin Shihuang was able to carry out a number of important reforms: standardizing the width of cart axles, decreeing a single written script, using common weights and measures, and organizing the administrative system of prefectures and counties. These measures laid the economic, political, and cultural basis for an integrated and unified state.

Standardizing axles, weights, and measures was imperative for economic integration. On the cultural side, a single written ideographic script separated speech from writing, so that different oral "tongues" were visually represented by a common set of symbols. This laid the ground for an integrated system of communication. To this day, the Chinese written script continues to exert the same dynamic influence. By abolishing the hereditary fiefdoms in favor of a system of prefectures and counties, a centralized system of political power was set up that lasted over 2,000 years.

I am not going to expand anymore on the integration of the Central Plains. Suffice it to say that it was just one more step in the formation of diversity within integration of the Chinese nation. The first step was the formation of the Huaxia tribal grouping and the next the growth of the Han people. This can be seen as the extension of the Huaxia core to the Han one.

I say that this Qin dynasty (220–206 BC) integration was just one step along the way because it only covered the Central Plains, just a small part of the space in which the Chinese nation lived. In the three-tiered geographical configuration of China's topology, this region is in the lowest tier and still only a part of it. Around the Central Plains were many other clans and groups which were also gradually moving toward integration. Let me start with the north.

Until now, most of our archaeological excavations have taken place in the Central Plains. This is why we have relatively little information on the ancient history of the surrounding regions. Professor Chen Liankai has put forth a very important idea, echoed by Professor Gu Bao after decades of field research in the Northwest, and that is, at the same time integration was taking place in the Central Plains during the

Han dynasty, a similar process was under way in the northern pastoral regions under the rule of the Xiongnu (the Hun). Both scholars further propose that the Chinese nation only truly came into being with the merging of these northern and southern integrated entities. I agree with them.

These separate regional integrations took place on the basis of ecological conditions. In the Central Plains, agriculture had developed in the Neolithic Age, and we have found the remains of grains at sites in the middle and lower reaches of the Yellow River. The remains of millet have also been found at Neolithic sites in the middle and lower reaches of the Yangtze River further south. From the Xia dynasty on, water management was one of the main tasks of the rulers, demonstrating the importance of irrigation to agriculture. Small-scale farming continues to be the livelihood of the Han people to this very day, and we still live in the shadow of Shennong, our traditional farming ancestor.

The arable lands of these plains merge into the grasslands of the Mongolian Plateau and Gobi to the north, which in turn extend westward to the Loess Plateau and even further to the Qinghai and Tibetan Plateaus. Apart from some stretches of the Loess region and a few basins, most of these plateaus are inhospitable to farming, but are suitable for herding. Both types of activities thus produced corresponding cultures. These were the natural conditions resulting in two different integrated entities.

The natural dividing line between these two geographic regions pretty much follows the existing Great Wall, which was started in the Warring States Period. The Qin and Han dynasties both extended the Wall, which represented the line of defense of the agrarian peoples against the incursions of the pastoral tribes. The farmers were on the defensive and the herders on the offensive, as determined by their contrasting economies. Farmers depended on the land, and the development of irrigation and water management works made them even more attached to their fields. As their population grew, they opened up new spaces and radiated outward from villages often composed of a single clan. They remained strongly bound to their ancestral lands, leaving only when forced to by natural disasters or war.

The herders were just the opposite. In a pastoral economy, the animals must eat the grass of the pastures and move to where it grows best. Nomads rely on their herds for meat, hide, wool, and milk and so must follow them as they move from place to place. Though there are certain patterns to their displacements, they do not stay anywhere for long, but follow the seasonal changes of the grasslands. Thanks to their horses, the herders move fast, gathering or dispersing easily. So when natural disasters affected the pastures, the northern nomads would congregate into large groups and move southward to prey upon the agricultural settlers. These conflicts became more acute as the populations and economies of both sides grew, and the nomads became one of the greatest threats to the farming areas. Individual farmers were helpless against them and had to rely on those with the military force and authority to mobilize and organize the construction of defense works. This was one of the historical forces that led to the centralization of political power. The Great Wall is a physical manifestation of this historical process.

The pastoral regions also needed some kind of authority to oversee economic development, mediate disputes over grazing lands, organize armed forces for self-defense, and lead raids in search of food, treasure, and people. We know very little about the early history of the northern nomadic peoples. By the time we read detailed accounts of them in the Han dynasty histories, the Xiongnu were already a mighty power ruling across vast lands stretching from the Daxing'anling Mountains outside the Great Wall in the east all the way across to the Qilian and the Tianshan Mountains in the west. This is what we mean by an integrated northern entity. By the early Han dynasty, there already existed "powerful Han in the south and strong Hu in the north."

The actual historical process was naturally quite complex. Since the 1930s, archaeologists have gradually unearthed remains of the Neolithic Hongshan culture in Chifeng (Zhaowuda Meng) in Inner Mongolia, outside the Great Wall. These ancient peoples had already settled and begun farming, as well as stock raising, fishing, and hunting. In recent years, a 5,000-year-old altar and "Goddess Temple" have also been uncovered, together with jade objects in the style of the latter part of the Shang dynasty (1300–1046 BC).

The discovery of bronze vessels has shown how little we know of the early cultures of the Northeast. In fact, the plains of the Northeast and the lands between the Daxing'anling and Yanshan Mountains were the birthplaces of many of the peoples who subsequently moved into the Central Plains. I will come back to this later.

The meeting between the cultures of the Central Plains and the northern grasslands was not really confrontational, though the historical record notes a seemingly endless list of raids and wars. No doubt these did occur, but even more important were the many more frequent, regular, and customary encounters and dealings that demonstrate a mutual dependence.

Pastoral nomadic peoples did not live on herding alone, since they needed other things beside milk, meat, wool, and hides. Their unsettled life meant there were only a few farms and handicraft workshops in the small oases, so other necessities such as grain, woven goods, metal implements, tea, and wine had to come from the agricultural regions. One channel was through barter trading posts and gifts from the government of the Central Plains, and the other was through regular commerce and trade.

This trade went both ways and was an exchange of needed goods: in the agrarian regions, farmwork and transport required large numbers of draft animals, and the army needed horses, none of which the farmers could provide in sufficient quantity. Farmers themselves also needed beef, mutton, hides, and wool. In return, silk and tea were important items for the nomads. The name for this kind of commerce was later shortened to "horse-silk barter" and "tea-horse trade." Many objects from the Central Plains, including coins, have been unearthed in northern grassland graves dating back to the late Warring States Period and the Han dynasty.

In the middle of the first century BC, strong pressure from Emperor Han Wudi (140–88 BC) forced the Xiongnu to split in two. One branch, the Northern Xiongnu, moved into Central Asia. The other, known as the Southern Xiongnu, remained in

what is today Inner Mongolia, gradually migrating south to mingle and live with the Han people south of the Great Wall. By the first century AD, such close encounters and mutual dependence had led those living around the cultivated areas to gradually settle among the Han farmers and make a living partly by farming and partly by herding.

The Great Wall is testimony to the clash between the defensive farmers and the offensive nomads during the 200-odd years from the Warring States to the Qin dynasty. However, as the agricultural regions integrated and grew stronger, the balance of power shifted under Emperor Han Wudi who began to go on the offensive. This strategic shift westward resulted in four prefectures in the west of today's Gansu province: Dunhuang, Jiuquan, Wuwei, and Zhangye. That is when some 280,000 people, mostly Han, began migrating into these areas.

These four prefectures of Hexi were situated in a corridor that linked the Loess Plateau with the Tianshan Mountains. The plains of this corridor receive very little precipitation, but the mountainous areas around have more abundant rainfall and, together with the melted snows of the Qilian Mountains, provided the Han settlers with the water to open up land and plant crops.

The corridor had been the grazing lands of the Wusun and Yuezhi peoples, but they were chased out by the Xiongnu who joined up with the Qiang people to surround the Han from the west. In 122 BC, Emperor Han Wudi forced the Xiongnu to surrender and, thanks to the increased Han migration into the four prefectures, succeeded in breaking this encirclement and "isolating the Qiang nomads." The corridor provided a channel for the opening up of the Western Regions. Later, Han dynasty rulers used it to ally with the small farming states that had been dominated and pillaged by the Xiongnu in the basin south of the Tianshan Mountains, as well as to join up with the Wusun people who had been exiled into Central Asia. This created a counter encirclement of the Xiongnu and eventually led to their defeat.

Vast grasslands stretch from the Mongolian Plateau north along the Tianshan Mountains and westward through Central and Western Asia, providing unobstructed pastures for the nomadic herding peoples, who came and went freely and swiftly across the steppes. Squabbles over grazing lands led to alternating occupation and exclusion, so the tribes sometimes grouped together and sometimes scattered. The strongest ones imposed their rule and name on the others. This is the reason for a string of different tribal names recorded in the history annals: after the Xiongnu came the Rouran, Tujue, Tiele, and Huihe. Sometimes they occupied the whole of the grasslands, sometimes only a part. Eventually, the Mongols emerged supreme and their power stretched all the way to Western Asia.

Today, many direct descendants of these tribes still live on the grasslands, but many assimilated and intermarried with other groups, in a very complex historical process of mingling and breaking apart. I will not go into detail here. Suffice to say that in Xinjiang today, five ethnic peoples speak a language belonging to the Tujue (Turkic) family. They are the Uighur, Kazakh, Uzbek, Tatar, and Kirghiz peoples, all descendants of ancient tribes who once roamed the steppes.

9.6 Integration in the Central Plains

Once the ethnic Han people had coalesced, it acted as a cohesive cultural core that began to radiate outward, absorbing other peoples into its orbit. Shortly after the Han and Wei dynasties came the so-called Sixteen Kingdoms Period scattered throughout the Yellow River and the Ba-Shu (modern Sichuan province) basins. In fact these were over 20 different, mostly non-Han local kingdoms. For the next 150 years (304–439), their populations lived in mixed communities, intermingling and assimilating in what was a prelude to the eventual diversity within integration that had begun centuries earlier in the Han dynasty. The "absorption" of the Xiongnu was just one act in this long process.

Three of these local kingdoms belonged to the Xiongnu, four to the Di, one to the Jie, seven to the Xianbei, one to the Qiang, and three to the Han. They covered practically the whole of the Central Plains, as well as parts of the modern provinces and regions of Shaanxi, Shanxi, Hebei, Henan, Gansu, Ningxia and Sichuan, Shandong, Jiangsu, Anhui, Liaoning, Qinghai, and Inner Mongolia.

The establishment of some of these non-Han kingdoms in the northern and western regions brought large numbers of their peoples into them, but they did not integrate with the Han people already living there. It was then that the name "Han" as a term for a distinct grouping became widely used, and because Han people had a lower political status, the term took on a derogatory connotation. However, in North China things were different. The non-Han who migrated in shifted from a nomadic to a farming lifestyle, and their economic status also changed their social standing. It is from this time on that there are records of "Hu (nomadic peoples) changing their surnames to Han ones." By the Northern Wei (386–534), after the unification of North China, there was even an edict for Hu people to change their double-character surnames to single-character Han ones. In the *Book of Wei* (《魏书》), there is a list of 126 Hu surnames of which 60 later no longer appeared in official documents. Intermarriage was common within all social strata including the highest. Political status of the non-Han was changeable, rising and falling as people came and went, and many blended into the Han. The rise of the Han people was not simply from the natural increase in their population, but even more importantly due to the assimilation of many non-Han settlers in the farming areas, causing a snowballing effect of the Han culture.

Following the fractured and divided configuration during the Northern and Southern dynasties (420–589) came the unification of the enlarged Central Plains under the Sui (581–618) and Tang dynasties. Many members of the ruling class of the Tang dynasty (618–907) were of mixed origin from a number of different ethnicities. The Xianbei aristocracy, who had assimilated with the Han, played a key role in the establishment of the Tang and thus occupied a very important place within the ruling elite. Of the 369 prime ministers of the Tang dynasty, 36 of them, or one tenth, were of Hu (non-Han) origin. There are chapters in the *Book of Tang* (《唐书》) devoted entirely to generals of non-Han ancestry. Toward the end of the dynasty, the Shatuo people became very aggressive, and of the Five Dynasties (907–960)

that replaced the Tang, three of them, Later Tang, Later Jin, and Later Han, were all set up by the Shatuo. Emperor Zhuangzong Li Cunxu who founded the Later Tang were both from the Shatuo. We like to say the Han people ruled during the Tang dynasty, but in fact people from many ethnicities occupied powerful positions in the government. In the 500 years between the start of the Tang and the end of the Song (960–1127) dynasties, the whole of the Central Plains was one huge ethnic melting pot, with the Han people at its center. Many non-Hans became assimilated through a long complex process, with the result that distinct historical ethnic groups like the Xianbei, the Di, and the Jie eventually blended in and disappeared.

The Tang dynasty was indisputably a high-water mark in Chinese civilization, distinguished for its cosmopolitan inclusiveness and creativity. This can be closely associated with the extensive interpenetration and wide assimilation of so many different ethnic peoples.

9.7 Fresh Blood from the Northern Peoples

The Northern Song (960–1127) may have unified the Central Plains after the Five Dynasties, but it was relatively weak. To its north was a powerful tribe called the Khitan that first began to flourish in 916 in the Balinzuo Banner of Inner Mongolia. Later known as the Liao dynasty (907–1125), its territory stretched from the mouth of the Heilongjiang River westward to the central part of today's Mongolia. Its southern border with the Song stretched from today's Tianjin through Baxian county in Hebei province to Yanmen Pass in Shanxi province. It ruled for 210 years before being overthrown by the Nuzhen, another northern tribe. Originating in the Baishan Heishui region, the Nuzhen founded the Jin dynasty (1115–1234), overthrew the Liao in 1125, and then went on to defeat the Northern Song. Its first capital was set up in today's Beijing and then was moved south to Kaifeng. Its territory incorporated the domains of the former Liao and extended further west into Shaanxi and Gansu to meet the territory of the Western Xia dynasty (1032–1227); to the south it extended up to the Qinling Mountains and the Huai River and the border with the Southern Song. The Song lasted for over 300 years in all, during which time, the many populations inhabiting the northern part of the Central Plains continued to mix, assimilate, and blend, giving the Han people the strength to spread further south. Of that more later.

It is necessary here to mention the Song-Liao (Songhuajiang River and Liaohe River) Plain that lies east of the Daxing'anling Mountains (in Northeast China). This long north-south range throws up a heavily forested barrier between the steppe and the Plain that probably stopped the nomadic herders on the western side from moving further east. It now seems that some of these herder groups may actually have originated from the hunting tribes in the forest.

I recently went to the Daxing'anling Mountain region for field research. About 10 km northwest of Alihe Town in the Hohhot union, there is a cave in the forest called Gaxian Cavern containing a stone slab with a carved eulogy, erected in 443

on the edict of Tuoba Tao, King Wudi of the Northern Wei (386–534), in honor of his ancestors. This indicates that the early Xianbei tribes lived in the forest. Later they migrated southwest to the grasslands around the Hulun Lake and then moved even further southwest to settle between the Yinshan Mountains and the bend of the Yellow River, where they became the Tuoba people. One offshoot later migrated into Qinghai, but the main branch was active in the early fourth century in Inner Mongolia and Datong in Shanxi province. In 386, the Tuoba founded the Wei Kingdom and in 439 unified the northern part of the Central Plains.

The Khitan people, founders of the Liao dynasty, originally were herders living in the upper reaches of the Liao River. They declared allegiance to the Tang court, and after the Tang, Yelu Apaoki set himself up as emperor in 916. Large numbers of Han people migrated into the region, developing agriculture and the handicraft industry. However, after being defeated by the Jin, the Khitan assimilated with the Han and Nuzhen peoples.

Like the Khitan, the Nuzhen, who set up the Jin dynasty, also first flourished in the Song-Liao Plain. Like them they progressed to strength and then declined and were eventually overcome. During their reign over the northern Central Plains, they used the names "Han," "Yan," and "Nan" to distinguish the local ethnicities from themselves, but later, many Nuzhen began to take Han surnames. The *History of Jin* (《金史》) records 31 such names. This change was voluntary, not the result of an imperial edict. Taking Han surnames did not necessarily mean they had completely assimilated, only that they no longer resisted the process.

Neither the Khitan nor the Nuzhen succeeded in unifying the whole of China, even though they reigned supreme over the northern Central Plains. Only after the Yuan dynasty (1271–1368) was established did the northern people succeed in unifying the entire Chinese territory under one political power. The Yuan ruled for 97 years, and later the Manchus, descendants of the Nuzhen, founded the Qing dynasty (1644–1911) which lasted 267 years. The Mongols and the Manchus were both non-Han peoples, and even today, their populations number several millions. However, under their rules, the Han people still continued to grow, and after their dynasties were overthrown, there was large-scale assimilation with the Han.

Under the Mongol rule of the Yuan dynasty, the population was divided into four categories: Mongol, Semu, Han, and Nan. The Nuzhen, Khitan, and Gaoli peoples were all included in the Han category and treated in the same way. The *History of Yuan* (《元史》) states, "Nuzhen and Khitan are the same as Han. If Nuzhen and Khitan live in the northwest and do not speak the Han language, they are treated like Mongols; if they live in the Han lands, they are treated as Han."[4] It seems the Nuzhen and the Khitan were also dividing into two branches, one assimilating with the Han and the other with the Mongols. The Yuan also divided the Han into Han and Nan categories based on the boundary between the Song dynasty and the Jin. All Han people living within the former Jin borders who came under early Mongol domination continued as Han; later, after the Mongols conquered the Southern Song dynasty, all its inhabitants were known as Nan, Song, newcomers, or barbarians.

[4] Chapter 10 of "Chronicle of the Emperor Shizu" (1260–1294), *History of Yuan*.

The non-Han living south of the Yangtze River seem to have also been included in this grouping. Such social categorization served to increase the blending of non-Han with Han.

After the Mongols came a Han dynasty: the Ming (1368–1644). In the early years, edicts were issued to revive "Tang dress" and to forbid Hu (Tatar) attire, language, and names. However, using administrative orders to change national customs and language proved ineffective. In *Records of the Ming* (《明实录》), a 1442 petition is quoted as saying that "Tatar attire" was more popular than Tang dress. The well-known thinker and scholar Gu Yanwu (1613–1682), living in the late Ming and early Qing, wrote in *Records of the Everyday*, "The upper classes of the Huaxia people intermarried with the barbarian herders. A pity that the educated of the time could only recite how the Huaxia transformed the barbarian, but did not know the key differences between the two," and also noted that many inhabitants of Shandong were descendants of the Jin and Yuan. Such comments show that intermarriage among the upper classes of all ethnic groups was already quite frequent and that assimilation was widespread.

Mr. Liang Shuming[5] recently published *Questions and Answers* that gives a good example of how the Mongol people became assimilated. He writes, "My family came from the same Mongol Temujin clan as the Yuan emperors. After the Yuan collapsed, Emperor Shundi fled north with the royal family and his followers back to what is now Mongolia, but my family remained behind in Ruyang, Henan province. It changed its surname to Liang. … Over the 500 years since, the Ming and Qing dynasties have come and gone, and if it were not for our family genealogical records, no one, not even our own members would know that we are actually of Mongol blood. Generations of intermarriage have mixed our bloodlines and blended the qualities from both."[6] Before reading this, I did not know that Mr. Liang's ancestors were in fact Mongols, and he himself had never claimed he was nor denied he was Han. What's interesting to note is that he believes that the original Mongol blood from 500 years back is still at the source of his "blended qualities," which goes to show how strong an ethnic identity can be. After 1949, many people who had said they were Han reclaimed their Mongol identity.

The Mongols first overran the northern regions of China, and then they turned westward and conquered Central Asia. After that, they turned back, marched through Gansu and Sichuan, entered Yunnan, and followed the Yangtze River eastward to eventually overthrow the Southern Song dynasty. As a result of these wars, an important new ethnic group was added to the Chinese nation: the Hui people. The 1982 census counted 7.22 million Hui, the second largest minority people after the Zhuang. Although concentrated primarily in Ningxia and Gansu, they are the most widely dispersed ethnicity, with communities of varying sizes in Qinghai, Henan, Shandong, Yunnan, and all the major cities.

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[5] 1893–1988, prominent intellectual, educator, social activist, and one of the early representatives of modern Neo-Confucianism.

[6] Liang Shuming and Wang Donglin, *Questions and Anwers* (in Chinese, *Wenda lu*, 《问答录》), Changsha: Hunan Publishing House, 1988, p. 2.

In the middle of the seventh century, large numbers of Muslim Arabs and Persians came to China via the maritime routes and settled in the trading ports of Guangzhou, Quanzhou, Hangzhou, and Yangzhou. They were called "foreign guests." In the early thirteenth century, the Mongols started their westward campaigns, conquering many Central Asian Islamic kingdoms as they advanced. Large numbers of local merchants and craftsmen signed into their expeditionary army and were known as "scarlet mounted scouts." Later, these people entered China with the Mongol Army on its campaigns against the Southern Song and became known along the way as the "Huihui Army." Intermarriage between the Han, Huihui, and "foreign guests" thus formed the basis of the Muslim Hui people inhabiting all the central provinces. Many Central Asian merchants and craftsmen in the Mongol Army settled in major Chinese cities, but many were also posted to guard the frontiers mainly in Gansu and Yunnan where they became soldier-farmers, "fighters when mounted, farmers and herders otherwise."[7] Placed in the social category of Semu, they enjoyed a high political and social status, which continued into the Ming dynasty, both in government and in the military. The largest Hui populations were in the Gansu-Qinghai region, and at one point there was the expression "seven Hui for three Han." Many also lived in the Dali area of Yunnan province, but later, ethnic violence and bloodshed during the Qing dynasty (1616–1911) greatly reduced their numbers in both these regions.

During the Tang dynasty (618–907), many of the merchants who traveled along the Silk Road were "foreign guests" and came from a tradition of commerce. Later, after the Hui ethnicity coalesced, their members also became very successful traders in the Loess Plateau regions bordering Inner Mongolia to the north and the steppes of Qinghai and Tibet to the west. The so-called tea and horse trade built upon farming products and livestock flourished in the land corridor between Gansu, Qinghai, and Ningxia on the upper reaches of the Yellow River. Even today, the largest populations of Hui people are still congregated in the Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region and the Linxia Hui Autonomous Prefecture of Gansu.

Today, the Muslim Hui people speak Han Chinese. It is hard to say when and how the early Muslims who came to China via the maritime routes and through Central Asia lost their original languages. One theory is that, since Muslim women were few and far between in the army and trade caravans and carrying on the bloodline was important, intermarriage with Han women became commonplace, and they naturally taught their children their own language. Knowledge of the local language was also necessary for business, and since the Hui lived in small communities scattered among the more numerous Han, it was natural that language and lifestyles gradually blended. However, they did not forsake their Islamic faith, which was a way of preserving and strengthening their ethnic identity within the vast Han population around them. Tradition allows Hui men to marry Han women who must then convert to Islam. Hui women, however, may not marry Han men unless they have first converted and joined the Muslim community.

[7] *Military Annals*, *History of Yuan* (《元史·兵志》).

The Manchus of the Qing dynasty followed the same path of assimilation as the other northern peoples after they entered the Central Plains. This is familiar recent history and there is no need to say more. Before 1949, I did not know that linguist Luo Changpei or writer Lao She were Manchus. They only declared their ethnic origin after New China was born. Of course, we Han never felt any ethnic difference between us when we were together, but they knew they were Manchus, which goes to show how, within an integrated whole, the sense of diversity remains strong.

In the long course of history, the northern non-Han peoples repeatedly migrated in large numbers into the agricultural lands of the Central Plains, each wave bringing fresh blood to the Han, making them stronger and more dynamic, and contributing new elements toward the eventual formation of the Chinese nation. "Diversity within integration" was heavily influenced by this process. In this paper I can only give the simple outline above.

9.8 The Han Contribution

Among all the ancient ethnic peoples of China, only the Yuezhi, Wusun, Xiongnu, and Tujue migrated in part or completely away to places outside the Chinese territory; most of the other ethnicities and tribes remained, so that over the centuries, extensive encounters and assimilation took place. In the previous section, I traced how these diverse groups were absorbed into the Han population over different periods of time. In this section I shall describe the reverse process, that is, how the Han people blended into other groups.

This occurred in two main ways: one was through imposed assimilation, such as capture by the Xiongnu, Western Qiang, or Tujue or being sent by the Central Plain rulers to garrison the border regions (soldiers, convicts, the poor). Another way was through migration caused by natural calamities or war. Both involved very large numbers of people. One estimate is that "the Xiongnu had 300,000 slaves, up to one seventh or one fifth of their total population"[8]; another estimate places the number of slaves at "over 500,000 or one third of the total population."[9] The majority of these slaves were Han, though there were also people of the Western Hu and Dingling tribes. In AD 109, the Southern Xiongnu "repatriated 10,000 Han men and women who had been captured, or seized by the Qiang and sold to the Xiongnu."[10]

During the Western Han dynasty (206 BC–AD 23), a number of reasons were given by Hou Ying, an imperial doctor, for not abandoning the border garrisons or dismantling the Great Wall; one of them stated that "many border inhabitants are unhappy… and often flee beyond the Wall," which shows that Han people often fled

[8] *History of the Xiongnu–A Collection of Essays* (in Chinese, *Xiongnu shi lunwen xuanji*, 《匈奴史论文选集》), Shanghai: Chong Hwa Book Co., 1983, pp. 10, 12.

[9] *Ibid*.

[10] *Biographies of the Southern Xiongnu*, *Book of Later Han* (in Chinese, *Hou Han Shu–Nan Xiongnu zhuan*, 《后汉书·南匈奴传》).

into the Xiongnu pasturelands. By the end of the Eastern Han (25–220), over 100,000 Han households had taken refuge in the Wuhuan region. After the fall of the Eastern Jin (317–420), the Central Plains were plunged into chaos, and many Han people migrated north to Liaoxi and west to Hexi and Xiyu, and many also went south. In the *Biography of Murong Gui* recorded in *History of Jin*, there is the following description, "With the fall of the two capitals of Luoyang and Chang'an, the territories of Youzhou and Jizhou also were overrun. The Xianbei ruler of Liaoxi Murong Gui, an outstanding military leader and administrator, decided to attract as many talented people from these areas as he could by adopting an open and modest attitude. Many refugees, both noblemen and commoners, packed their bags and came to him. In order to administer them, Murong Gui set up prefectures: Jiyang for those from Jizhou, Zhou for those from Yuzhou, Yingqiu for those from Qingzhou, and Tangguo for those from Bingzhou." Clearly a great many people were involved in these massive movements. Many of the Han migrants intermarried with the local inhabitants and adjusted to the natural and social environment by changing their habits and ways of life. Within a few generations, they had completely blended in. For example, the state of Gaochang (Qocho) founded in 399 by the House of Ju in the Turpan Basin and its surroundings (in modern Xinjiang) had originally been populated mainly by Han people and descendants of soldier-farmers from the Han and Wei (220–265) dynasties and of refugees from the Jin dynasty. The *History of Gaochang* in the *Book of Wei* (《魏书·高昌传》) recorded this process, "The people there were descended from the Han people of the Han and Wei dynasties. Since the Jin dynasty, Han customs were no longer the norm because they were hard to spread. This has been so for a long time."

By that time, Hu (Tatar) ways were well entrenched, as described in detail in *Chronicle of Gaochang*, *Records of Xiyu* in *History of Northern Dynasties* (《北史·西域传·高昌传》): "The men dressed in the Hu style, the women wore skirts and put their hair in a bun. Their customs and rules were similar to Huaxia, they used the same writing together with the Hu script. … They had *Book of Songs*, *Confucian Analects* and *Book of Filial Rites* which they recite but in the Hu tongue." Gaochang under the House of Ju lasted 141 years, during which time it was a vassal state of the Rouran, Gaoche, and Tujue, all northern nomadic peoples. In AD 640, it was conquered by the Tang dynasty (618–907) which set up the prefecture of Xizhou there. In AD 866, the Huihe (Uighur) occupied Xizhou, and during their long rule, the Han people became assimilated with the Uighur. During the same period, the peoples living in the oases south of the Tianshan Mountains and speaking the Indo-European tongues of Yanpeng-Qiuci (Tocharian) and Yutian Khotan also gradually blended into the Uighur people.

Another example: during the Warring States Period, Zhuang Qiao of the state of Chu led thousands of peasants in a migration to the Dianchi Lake region of Yunnan where he proclaimed himself king. Later, during the Han and Jin dynasties, Han people also moved into Yunnan, but all those who migrated there before the Ming dynasty (1368–1644) pretty much assimilated with the local ethnic groups. The Han who moved to the Erhai Lake area of Dali in Yunnan became an important subgroup within the Bai people there.

In the past, there has not been much research into the historical process of ethnic fusion and assimilation down the centuries, particularly that of Han people blending into other groups. This neglect easily results in a one-sided impression that the Han people have mixed bloodlines while the other groups are more pure. In fact all ethnic groups have absorbed and been absorbed. There is another assumption that those from a less-developed economy and culture automatically assimilate with those from a more highly developed one, but this too is only partially true, since historically there have been times when the more advanced Han have merged with surrounding peoples who were at a lower level of socioeconomic development. More fact-based analysis of the process is necessary. I have deliberately added this section because I wish to point out that while noting how the Han have absorbed a great deal from other ethnicities, we should not ignore the fact that in turn, the Han also infused new blood into them as well. From the biological so-called "bloodline" point of view, the Chinese nation is very mixed, and no ethnic group can claim "purity" of descent.

9.9 Han Expansion Southward

By the time of the Warring States Period, the Huaxia people, forebears of the Han, had already spread east to the ocean, south to the middle and lower reaches of the Yangtze, and west to the Loess Plateau. This expansion of the core at the expense of the other surrounding tribes, the so-called southern *yi* and northern *di* (sometimes referred to as "barbarians"), took the form either assimilating them or driving them into remote places. The Northern and Southern Xiongnu are a good example of this: the southern tribes became assimilated, and the northern ones crossed the steppes of Central Asia into Eastern Europe and left the Chinese sphere of influence altogether. Very few other ethnic groups were able to do this. It is possible that some of the indigenous inhabitants of the Shandong Peninsula, the "eastern *yi*," left by sea or passed through the northeast to enter today's Korean Peninsula and the Japanese islands. Most of the non-Han peoples who did not assimilate were forced to move to places the Han were reluctant to settle, mostly mountains or grasslands that did not support farming. Some have remained in these places until today, preserving their national identities and contributing to the diversity of the Chinese nation.

This long process can be traced back to the myths of the "Three Sovereigns and Five Emperors." Huangdi (c. 3000 BC), widely considered to be an ancestor of the Han people, fought a battle against Yandi and Chi You on the northern banks of the Yellow River. Yandi later was also considered to be one of the ancestors of the Han, which is why the Chinese nation has styled itself "descendants of Huang and Yan." Chi You, so the legend goes, was always considered "of another tribe"; the "Three Miao" that he led have been linked to the Miao ethnicity because of the common name, which seems a bit farfetched, though it is probably true that after Chi You, some tribes were indeed excluded from the Han.

As I have noted above, the archaeological record shows eastern and western Neolithic civilizations in the middle and lower reaches of the Yangtze and Yellow

Rivers. One of them, the Dawenkou culture (5300–2400 BC) in the region stretching from south-central Shandong southward to Qinglian'gang in the Xu-Huai Plain, was a highly developed farming society that lasted nearly 3,000 years and can be associated with the "eastern *yi*" mentioned in the history annals. It most certainly included many different clans and tribes. They were the predecessors of the Yin people of the Shang dynasty (1660–1300 BC), later defeated first by the Qiang and then the Zhou from the west. Some of them, together with the Zhou, merged with the Huaxia clans and tribes. Some of the other groups were expelled and moved northward, either by sea or land, to settle in the Korean Peninsula and on the Japanese islands, but most of them migrated south.

This hypothesis of mine is based on my research from the 1930s into the physical type of the Korean people. In my master's degree thesis, I noted that the data on the physical type of the Koreans showed that many had type B blood, similar to the coastal inhabitants of Jiangxi and Jiangsu, as well as the same round skull and short stature. These physical characteristics are also found among the Yao people of the Dayao Mountains in Guangxi.

If this data is correct, then it is plausible to deduce a historical link between the people from these three places. My work on anthropometrics was interrupted a long time ago and my data has been lost, so I can only rely on memory to propose such ideas.[11]

My deductions were supported by Professor Pan Guangdan, one of my teachers. He examined written historical records and went on field studies to the She people in Fujian province, from which he proposed ideas that I recall briefly from memory.

By following the place and clan names of Xu, Shu, and She, it is possible to trace a hypothetical route of migration. In the Spring and Autumn and Warring States Periods (770–210 BC), an offshoot of the "eastern *yi*" with the clan name of Xu probably lived between the Yellow and Huai Rivers. Today there is the city of Xuzhou in this region. According to *Chinese Archaeological Discoveries and Research*,[12] the state of Xu during the Zhou dynasty (1046–256 BC) was strong and continued to flourish through the Spring and Autumn Period, only succumbing to the state of Chu in 512 BC. In recent years, a number of finds in northwest Jiangxi of bronze vessels dating back to the state of Xu in the mid-Spring and Autumn Period seem to support this claim and could be linked to the migration of the clan. Written records from the period indicate that the inhabitants of this area had the name of Shu. Mr. Pan thinks that "She" and "Xu" were pronounced the same way and that the Xu and Shu were the forebears of the She. He also proposes that the

[11] The author revised and supplemented his deductions on the physical type of the Yao people; see *Studying Anthropometrics with Professor Shikogorov* (in Chinese, *Cong Shi Luguo laoshi xue tizhi renleixue*, 《从史禄国老师学习体质人类学》), in *Complete Works of Fei Xiaotong* (*Fei Xiaotong quanji*, 《费孝通全集》), Vol. 14, Huhehot: People's Publishing House of Inner Mongolia, 2009.

[12] Institute of Archeology of Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, *Chinese Archaeological Discoveries and Research* (in Chinese, *Xin Zhongguo de kaogu faxian he yanjiu*, 《新中国的考古发现和研究》), Beijing: Wenwu Press, 1984, p. 317.

She-Yao legend of Panhu is a later mythologized version of the recorded historical fact of King Xu Yan crossing Shanbang. Later, these people migrated into the Yangtze River basin, and those who settled in the Nanling Mountains possibly became the Yao people. Those who moved eastward and merged with the Han in the mountains of Jiangxi, Fujian, and Zhejiang may have become the She; another offshoot settled in the Dongting Lake region, later migrating into western Hunan and the hills of Guizhou to possibly become the Miao people. Professor Pan links the Yao and the Miao because their languages come from the same system, known as the Miao-Yao family, which indicates that they may have had the same origin.

Assuming that the Yao, Miao, and She are the descendants of those "eastern *yi*" who migrated westward over a period of 2,000 years, then what happened to those who remained in the east? It can be hypothesized that they fused with the Qinglian'gang culture of northern Jiangsu and Hemudu-Liangzhu culture of the lower Yangtze River, the region later occupied by the states of Wu and Yue during the Warring States Period. During the Three Kingdoms Period (220–280), the Sun rulers of this region often had to deal with the very troublesome Yue people living in the mountains. This is why I hypothesize that those early Neolithic cultures actually were the foundations of the later Wu-Yue culture.

Archaeological data from the region covering southern Zhejiang along the coast south to Guangdong is still incomplete. However, the discovery of Shixia culture in Guangdong has indicated that there were direct and indirect contacts with as well as influences from cultures situated in the Ganjiang River basin, in the middle and lower reaches of the Yangtze River, and even from as far away north as the coastal regions of Shandong. These influences seem to have become greater and reached further over time, so it is possible to conclude that these coastal regions had always maintained close links.[13] Such clues lead me to conjecture that not only did different ethnicities come into contact but that they actually had similar origins, that is to say, the entire coastal region from Shandong to Guangdong was inhabited by the ancient Yue (越) people or today's Yue (粵). During the Eastern Han, there was the state of Yue in Guangdong; toward the west in Guangxi lived the Luo-Yue; later during the Three Kingdoms, the Kingdom of Wu had the Shan-Yue, originating from the earlier Ou-Yue of southern Zhejiang, while in Fujian lived the Min-Yue; in other words, they all belonged to the same ethnic Yue group.

Many ethnologists connect the ancient Yue people with the modern members of the Zhuang and Dong linguistic family in the provinces of the southwest. These include the Zhuang in Guangxi; the Buyi, Dong, and Shui in Guizhou; and the Dai in Yunnan. If this historical link can be established, that means they are also connected to the former coastal Yue, who have now already merged with the Han people. Today, a distinct Yue line is only preserved in the mountainous southwest, where members live by farming in the valleys. A number of Miao, Yao, and other small ethnic minorities have also settled higher in the mountains or on the slopes. We still do not have much specific historical data on how such a widespread and numerous systems of Yue people came into being.

[13] *Op. cit*., Institute of Archeology of Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, p. 166.

Above is a description of the lower Yangtze River, the coast, and a part of the southwest border region. Below I will describe what happened in the middle reaches of the Yangtze River.

The Neolithic Daxi culture followed by the Qujialing and then Qinglongquan cultures in the Jiang-Han Plain of Hubei province was succeeded by the Chu civilization. The state of Chu (1042–223 BC) retained very distinctive features all the way through the Spring and Autumn and Warring State Periods. Qu Yuan (340–278 BC), the well-known statesman and poet, wrote his *Sonnets from Chu* (《楚辞》) in Chu script, according to Chu tones, recording Chu place names and objects. The inhabitants of the Central Plains considered the people of Chu to be "southern barbarians (*man*)," and even Sun Xiongnu, the fifth-generation descendant of the founder of Chu, said of himself: "I am a *manyi*, my titles are different from the middle states."[14] There were over 60 small fiefdoms under the state of Chu, so it was also an integrated entity with diversity, just like the parallel Huaxia in the Central Plains. It covered a vast territory, which according to *Huainanzi* (《淮南子》) stretched "south from Yuanxiang, north to Yingsi, surrounded Ba and Shu, went east to Tanpi; Yingru were its water channels, the Jiang and Han Rivers were its moat so that it partitioned up all under Heaven." The Chu rulers even sent people west into Yunnan to occupy the Dianchi Lake region.

The Chu had a highly developed agrarian economy and very sophisticated culture. Although it was first conquered by the Qin dynasty (221–206 BC), it continued to resist the succeeding Han dynasty (206 BC–AD 220). In the end, Chu ruler Xiang Yu, defeated and ashamed to face his people, committed suicide after being surrounded by the Han armies. Even so, the integration of Chu and Han into a single entity was a long-drawn-out process.

During the Qin, Han people had already crossed the Nanling Mountains and entered the Pearl River basin. Today, the irrigation channels they dug in Guilin of the Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region are evidence of this. However, it was only later during the Han dynasty that Han culture really penetrated into the Yue region. The King of Southern Yue remained a strong local force during this time, and it took nearly 1,000 years before the Han people eventually became the main settled population in the regions south of the Nanling Mountains. The ethnic composition of Hainan Island also shows this historical layering. The earliest inhabitants were the Li people with an independent language that belongs to the Zhuang-Dong linguistic family, showing that it had branched off quite early from the others. From this it is possible to deduce that when the Yue people originally populated the coastal region, a number crossed the channel and settled on the island. After the Li people, another offshoot of the Zhuang-Dong established themselves in the northern part of the island, calling themselves the Lin'gao and speaking a language similar to modern Zhuang. Today they consider themselves to be Han. Later, probably in the Ming dynasty (1368–1644), speakers of the Yao language migrated on to the island. People called them the Miao and today they still go by that name. I infer from this that they are the Yao who went the furthest south. It was only in the Song (960–

[14] From *House of Chu*, *Records of the Grand Historian* (《史记·楚世家》).

1279) and Yuan (1279–1368) dynasties that large numbers of Han people moved to the island, mostly to the coastal areas.

9.10 Ethnic Movements in the Western Regions

Let us return to the western regions of the Chinese territory, to the places where large communities of ethnic minorities continue to live today, that is, the Loess Plateau, the Qinghai-Tibetan Plateau, the Yunnan-Guizhou Plateau, and Xinjiang north and south of the Tianshan Mountains. The archaeological record here is much poorer than in the Central Plains and coastal regions, and its prehistory is not well documented. However, we already know that China's earliest ape-man fossils were unearthed in Yuanmou county on the Yunnan-Guizhou Plateau, and from the Paleolithic and Neolithic remains described in previous sections, we can say with certainty that humans have lived on the western plateaus from very early times.

In ancient written historical records, those who lived west of the Central Plains were collectively called the Rong. Those who lived where the farming and pastoral lands meet in the corridor along the upper Yellow River, in today's Ningxia and Gansu, were called the Qiang, which means "sheep herders." This was most likely a collective term used by the people in the Central Plains for all western nomads and included hundreds of tribes with many different names. In ancient books, the terms Qiang and Di are often used together, but we don't know if they were people of the same origin or perhaps spoke a similar language. The *Book of Later Han* (《后汉书》) says they "came from the Three Miao," or the tribes expelled by Huangdi from North China out to the northwest. The oracle bone script writings of the Shang dynasty (1600–1046 BC) already contain the character for "Qiang" and state that they lived in today's Gansu and Shaanxi regions. The Qiang and the Zhou were related by marriage, so the Zhou claimed Jiang Yuan as their ancestor. The Qiang enjoyed a high status in the ruling class of the Zhou dynasty (1046–256 BC) and later became an important addition to the Huaxia people.

Throughout history, the Qiang preserved a strong ethnic identity but also maintained a close relationship with the Central Plains. It was a powerful nation occupying the Gansu-Shaanxi region. The Dangxiang-Qiang people established the Western Xia Kingdom (1038–1227) that, at its height, included Ningxia, north Shaanxi, Gansu, Qinghai, and part of Inner Mongolia. It was one of the regional powers that challenged the Song dynasty (960–1279) after the Liao (907–1125) and Jin (1115–1234). It was an agricultural-herder society and possessed its own written script that resembled square Han characters. However, after being defeated by the Mongols, the Qiang were seldom mentioned again in Han language histories. Perhaps the majority had already assimilated with the local Han and other groups. Today, about one million people still identify themselves as Qiang (the 1964 census only recorded 500,000), mostly living in northern Sichuan where there is a Qiang autonomous county.

During the course of the formation of the Chinese nation, the Qiang seemed to have experienced the opposite of what happened to the Han people: the Han

absorbed others and became stronger, while the Qiang were absorbed and made others stronger. Many ethnic groups, including the Han, benefited from the new blood they infused.

For example, the Tibetan people in the extreme west. According to Han dynasty (206 BC–AD 226) historical records, the Tibetans were an offshoot of the western Qiang from the pre-Han period. They were called "Fa-Qiang" or *bod* in the ancient pronunciation. Tibetans still call themselves this today. The Fa-Qiang were one of many tribes living on the Qinghai-Tibetan Plateau and maintained contacts with other Qiang tribes in Gansu and Qinghai. The Tibetan language family is made up of three languages: Tibetan, Jiarong, and Menba. Some philologists also include Qiang, Pumi, and Luoba, while others put Jiarong and Qiang in the same branch. One theory is that the language of Western Xia was actually Jiarong or Qiang. All this indicates the close link between Tibetan and Qiang. Jiarong is spoken mostly by the inhabitants of Aba Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture in Sichuan. They are considered to be Tibetan.

Tibetan itself has three very distinct dialects: Weizang is spoken throughout most of the Tibetan Autonomous Region; Kang is spoken in the Tibetan autonomous prefectures of Ganzi in Sichuan, Diqing in Yunnan, and Yushu in Qinghai; Anduo is spoken in the Tibetan autonomous prefectures of southern Gansu and Qinghai. The complex makeup of the Tibetan people illustrates their diversity. Even if the Qiang were not the forefathers of the Tibetan ethnicity, they undoubtedly played an important role in its formation.

The Tibetans were a very powerful ethnic group. They unified the Qinghai-Tibetan Plateau, and their kingdom once stretched from the Pamir Plateau in the north to southern Xinjiang, eastward to the gates of the Tang dynasty (618–907) capital Chang'an, and southward to the Chengdu Plain in Sichuan. In the south, they occupied northern Yunnan where they bordered on the Kingdom of Nanzhao. At their height, they governed all the different peoples living in these regions, who were all called Tibetans. Even today, in the Aba district, there is a group that calls itself "White Horse Tibetans" yet neither speaks Tibetan nor believes in Tibetan Lamaism. Before 1949, they were called "Black Foreigners," and certain scholars believe they are the descendants of the Di people. In the corridor watered by six rivers in the Hengduan Mountains (on the border between the plateaus of Tibet, Sichuan, and Yunnan), there is a community that speaks Tibetan in public but another language at home. Clearly these are examples of ethnic mixing without assimilation.

If we assume that language can provide clues to the historical relationships between ethnic groups, then the fact that the Han and Tibetan languages are closely related also supports my hypothesis above that the Qiang were the link between the Tibetan and the Han peoples. By following this clue further, the closeness of the Tibetan language to the Yi also becomes clear. In fact, many scholars believe the Yi people also came from the Qiang. In *Encyclopedia of China*,[15] Professor Hu Qingjun writes about the Yi people,

[15] In Chinese, *Zhonguo dabaike quan shu* (《中国大百科全书》). 1st Edition 1993, 2nd Edition 2009, China Encyclopedia Press, Beijing.

> About four to five thousand years ago, a branch of the early Qiang migrated south and merged with the local tribes to become the Pu, a variant of the Qiang. … Early in the 4th century AD, descendants of the Qiang leader Wuge Aijian migrated south from Gansu, Ningxia and the Hehuang region of Qinghai to east of the Minshan Mountains, all the way to the banks of the Jinsha River, where they became the later subgroups known as the Wudu, Guanghan and Yuexi Qiang (a subgroup that went south much later) …

In the 1982 census, there were 5.45 million Yi people; by including all the ethnic groups that speak branches of the Yi language, such as the Hani, Naxi, Lisu, Lahu, and Jinuo, the population adds up to 7.55 million, second to the Zhuang and more than the Hui. The Hengduan Mountains where these peoples live are rugged and steep, sliced by deep valleys into numerous small areas cut off from each other. The smaller groupings actually all belong to the same ethnicity, but each has its own name and is considered to be different. Today, those speaking branches of the Yi language are identified as belonging to five ethnic groups. Also, within the Yi people, there are subgroups calling themselves the Nuosu, Nasu, Luowu, Misapo, Sani, and Axi.

When the Mongols attacked the Southern Song (1127–1279) and invaded Sichuan, Yunnan, and Guizhou, the various groups belonging to the Yi language family united to resist and came to be called by a single name: the Lolo. This was widely used up until 1949, but because of derogatory and discriminatory connotations, it was replaced by the name of Yi.

The Yi people ruled the Yunnan-Guizhou Plateau for many centuries. The Yuan (1279–1368) and Ming (1368–1644) dynasties appointed local Yi headmen called Tusi over the population, in a form of indirect rule on behalf of the central government. The Qing dynasty (1616–1911), however, through a policy of replacing native officials by centrally posted ones, assumed direct control. The more accessible areas experienced large-scale influxes of Han people, so that by 1746 it was recorded that Han and Yi people were living side by side in Dongchuan and Wumeng, and there was no difference from other regions in the interior.

Yi society developed in a very uneven fashion. Even before 1949, there were no obvious differences between the Yi upper classes and the local Han living in the towns, and they also held political and economic power in the local governments. However, in remote mountain areas such as Liangshan in Sichuan, Yi society still retained a form of slavery, and clans lived in small isolated "kingdoms" independent of outside control.

Today, there are six ethnic groups living on the Yunnan-Guizhou Plateau. The first, the Dai people belonging to the Zhuang-Dong language family, inhabit the southern region on the southwest border. It is hard to say now if they were indigenous to this hilly region or migrated here from the eastern coastal areas. A second group is made up of those speaking a branch of the Yi language, who migrated from the north; a third is the aboriginal people who have lived here from earliest times.

The archaeological record indicates that this region was one of the birthplaces of earliest humans, and so it's hard to imagine there is no genetic legacy somewhere, yet existing data cannot confirm any link with present-day groups. Perhaps most of the gene types have long since disappeared or been completely assimilated into later comers. Some ethnologists believe that the present-day Gelao and Mulao peoples

who live scattered throughout Guizhou and Guangxi are the descendants of an earlier-named Liao people, who were possibly the earliest inhabitants.

A fourth group of people are those who began to move here in the Spring and Autumn and Warring States Period (770–256 BC), which is documented by the early account of Zhuang Qiao from the state of Chu leading an army into the Dianchi Lake region. By the Han dynasty (206 BC–AD 220), there were already roads from Sichuan on to the plateau, and Sima Qian (145–87 BC), author of *Records of the Grand Historian* (《史记》), traveled to Yunnan, where he even discovered gold seals of the earlier Han dynasty near Dianchi. There are also many historical materials that record the large numbers of Han people who migrated to Yunnan and Guizhou during and after the Ming dynasty (1368–1644).

A fifth group of people is the mixed blood descendants of all the ethnicities listed above. The Bai people are possibly one of them. A sixth group is a number of peoples speaking languages belonging to the south Asian family, such as the Wa, De'ang, and Bulang, who possibly migrated in from territories outside China. A more complete picture of this whole southwestern region must include a few words about the Sichuan Basin that lies between the Qinghai-Tibetan, the Loess, and the Yunnan-Guizhou Plateau. Highly suitable for agriculture, it was inhabited very early on by the Shu and Ba peoples. The extant historical records show that earliest oracle bone inscriptions of the Shang dynasty already contained the character for "Shu," which was then an ancient kingdom in the Sichuan Basin. Later, when the Zhou conquered Shang, people from Shu also fought in the war.

The Shu people lived mainly in the western part of Sichuan. They had their own state, but were later conquered by the Qin (221–206 BC), which established the Shu prefecture. Migrants from the Central Plains moved here in large numbers, and the Shu eventually merged with the Han people.

The historical origins of the Ba people remain unclear. Legend has it that they came from the descendants of Linjun who originally lived on Mount Zhongli in Wuluo, which some claim is in today's Hubei province. They seem to have inhabited a territory that covered the east of Sichuan, the south of Shaanxi, and the west of Hubei and Hunan. In the early Western Zhou dynasty, the state of Ba was set up in the Han River basin. After the conquest by the Qin, the people of Ba vanished from the ethnic record. In the 1950s, Professor Pan Guangdan conducted research among the Tu (or Tujia) people of western Hunan and suggested they were the descendants of the Ba. In the early years of the People's Republic of China, the Tu were considered to be Han and not listed as a national minority.

Tu society and language are very close to the Han. However, since being recognized as a separate ethnic group, many inhabitants living on the borders between Hunan, Hubei, and Guizhou, who formerly claimed they were Han, have now changed to Tu. In the 1964 census, only 520,000 people registered as Tujia, but this increased to 2.8 million in the 1982 census, a fivefold growth over 18 years. This indicates that many non-Han peoples who for a long time had been absorbed into the Han still preserve a sense of their separateness.

9.11 Features of the Chinese National Entity

In the sections above, I have traced a rough outline of how the Chinese nation became integrated yet retained an internal diversity. While it is true that a conscious sense of a national entity only developed over the last century as a result of the strong resistance to Western powers, a de facto national entity had in fact been forming over the long historical process described above. This is the path by which the Chinese nation has evolved into a configuration characterized by diversity within integration. Allow me here to briefly point out a number of important features.

(1) A central cohesive core exists at the center of diversity within integration. At the dawn of civilization, from the Neolithic period through the Bronze Age, the tribes of the Huaxia lived in the middle reaches of the Yellow River and laid the foundations for this core. Later, new elements were absorbed from the east and west during the Xia (c. 2070–1600 BC), Shang (1600–1046 BC), and Zhou (1046–771 BC) dynasties, and these gradually blended through the Spring and Autumn and Warring States Periods (770–256 BC), right up until the Qin dynasty (BC 221–206) unified the Central Plains between the Yellow and Yangtze Rivers in 221 BC. The Han dynasty (206 BC–AD 220) succeeded the Qin, and the ethnic diversity blended into what became known as the Han people. This name, however, only became widely used later during the Northern and Southern dynasties (420–589). Over a period of 2,000 years and as a result of expansions in all directions, the Han people have assimilated many other ethnicities too. In 1982, China's population reached 936,670,000, 93.3 % of them Han. The 55 other ethnic minorities numbered 67,200,000 and made up 6.7 % of the total population.

The Han have congregated and settled in all the flat regions suitable for agriculture, except in the northwest and southwest. They have also been longtime inhabitants along the main lines of transport and at the trading centers in the minority ethnic regions. This interpenetration has resulted in a network of connected points highly concentrated in the east, less in the west. This constitutes the backbone for the configuration of diversity within integration.

(2) Strikingly, over half of the national territory of China is inhabited by minority peoples. Most of this land is high plateau, mountains, and grasslands. Herding is the main occupation for many ethnic peoples, resulting in a different kind of economy from the agricultural Han. China's five major grasslands are in minority areas, and all herders belong to minority groups.

Ethnic minority regions are defined as ones that have compact communities of minority peoples living there, but this does not mean there are no Han people. Sometimes, the Han are even in a majority. There are eight provinces (regions) where over 10 % of the population belongs to minorities: Inner Mongolia (15.5 %), Guizhou (26 %), Yunnan (31.7 %), Ningxia (31.9 %), Guangxi (38.2 %), Qinghai (39.4 %), Xinjiang (59.6 %), and Tibet (95.1 %). Only two autonomous regions have over half their populations belonging to minority groups. Sometimes, large and small communities of Han and minority peoples live in a mosaic of settlements; sometimes the Han live in the valleys and the ethnic peoples live in the mountains;

sometimes the Han are in a majority in the towns and the others live in the countryside; sometimes, they all live together in the same villages and settlements. That is why, apart from in Xinjiang and Tibet, it is difficult at the county level to find a "pure" compact community of a single ethnic group, and it is unusual even at the township level. With so much mixing and close contact, some Han people inevitably assimilated with the non-Han minorities; however, by and large, it was the Hans who, by penetrating into the minority regions, brought the others into the orbit of their culture, forming a cohesive core that facilitated integration.

(3) Ethnic minorities have by and large preserved their own languages. Only a few, for instance, the Hui, have adopted the Han language as their own. Some ethnic groups, like the Manchus, hardly use their own language at all in daily conversation, and very few of them can read the Manchu script anymore. They all use Han Chinese to express themselves in speech and writing. Outstanding figures like Luo Changpei and Lao She, whom I mentioned above, are good examples. Other minorities, like the She, claim they have their own language, but research has shown that it is in fact a dialect of Han Chinese. Ten ethnic groups claim a written language, but only the Tibetans, Mongols, Uighurs, Dais, and Koreans actually use the script. Some groups have a written script but very few can read it. Most of the ethnic peoples who have frequent contact with the Han have learned Han Chinese. In the early 1950s when I went to Guangxi and Guizhou to research the minorities there, most of the menfolk could converse with me in the local Han dialect, but used their own language among themselves. In the 1980s when I visited Inner Mongolia, I encountered Mongols who could not speak Han as well as ones who could not speak Mongolian. Different minority groups communicate with each other in various ways: sometimes using Han Chinese or each other's language or one of the other ethnic languages commonly spoken in the region. There is still not enough research into this, but generally speaking, Han Chinese is already becoming the "lingua franca." Since 1949, the government has recognized the right of all ethnic peoples to use their own spoken and written languages, and this has been enshrined in the constitution.

(4) Reasons for ethnic assimilation have been varied and complex. Social and economic forces appear to have been the strongest, though political ones cannot be ignored. A few decades ago, under the government of the Republic of China (1911–1949), there was an attempt to force the Miao people to cut their hair and change their ethnic attire. However, this kind of direct, political intervention is ineffective and quite harmful, since discrimination and repression arouse strong resistance and ethnic enmity that is highly divisive. Throughout history, each dynasty and even local governments developed specific policies to manage interethnic relations. A small number of ethnic rulers, such as the Xianbei of the Western Wei (535–556), did offer incentives and impose laws ordering their people to assimilate with the Han after they took over Han territory. However, most non-Han dynasties chose rather to lower the status of their Han subjects and to preserve their own identities. In this they were clearly unsuccessful, since political dominance does not necessarily equate with social and economic strength. What happened with the Manchus is the most recent and obvious example.

Since the Qin (second century BC), China has been a unified political entity for two thirds of its history, the divided and fractured periods accounting for only one third. From an ethnic point of view, however, the Han people were like a snowball, becoming bigger and bigger. During the divided times, peoples lived in mixed communities, assimilated and blended, and each time infused new blood into the Han, making them stronger.

I believe the principal source of this strong cohesive nature is the agricultural economy of the Han. It seems as if once the nomadic peoples entered the Central Plains and came into contact with the meticulous farming society, it was only a matter of time before they willingly assimilated with the Han.

To repeat what I have said before, most of the places inhabited by the minorities today such as the plateaus, valleys, and arid and inaccessible regions were all inhospitable to the Han, who either could not acclimatize or found them too infertile or unsuitable for agriculture. For an agrarian society, these places were unappealing. This means that most areas conducive to farming were occupied by the Han a long time ago. Later, they even opened up land that was not suitable for crops, such as grasslands, in the process destroying pastures, creating conflict between farmers and herders, and arousing ethnic discord. Can all this be taken as evidence that agriculture was the principal cause of Han flourishing and growth? The fact is that this long deep connection with the earth is even now, in the age of industrialization, still very hard to break.

(5) The Chinese nation is composed of many different ethnic groups that make up its diversity. They vary considerably in size. The Han people, after 2,000 years, have increased to 936.67 million people, the largest group in the world. The other 55 ethnicities are only 67.2 million strong, with some 800,000 who are still "unidentified." They are called "ethnic minorities" because of their small numbers compared to the Han. Fifteen minorities have populations over one million, the largest being the Zhuang (13 million); three minority groups number between one million and 500,000; ten between 500,000 and 100,000; fifteen between 100,000 and 10,000; and one between 10,000 and 5,000; and seven have less than 5,000 members, of which three have less than 2,000. The smallest group is the Luoba people with 1,066 members. The Gaoshan people of Taiwan are not included because of lack of data.

The ethnic populations increased between the 1964 and 1982 censuses. Total numbers grew by 68.42 %, an annual average of 2.9 %, higher than for the Han people (43.82 % and 2.0 %, respectively). The Tu people increased the fastest: 4.4 times over 18 years. Clearly this was not a natural increase but due to many people now claiming Tu origins who previously had not. This has occurred with other groupings too. Since the Han people have absorbed many other ethnicities over the centuries, it is possible that many people, looking back to the ethnic origins of their ancestors, now claim to be non-Han. The tricky issue here is now how to define these "ethnic origins" and to set criteria.

Another difficult issue is the so-called "unidentified" ethnicities, which means those whose ethnic origins are unclear. These people number about 800,000 and can be divided into two categories: one composed of those who cannot determine

whether they are Han or not and the other of those who are not sure which ethnic minority they belong to. This is called "ethnic identification" and is not about individuals but whole communities. One example would be groups that claim they are not Han, yet historical records show their ancestors were Han people who migrated to remote areas a long time ago yet for various reasons refused to consider themselves Han. Another example would be of some groups that split away from a non-Han ethnicity and rejected their original name. All these minority peoples are categorized as "unidentified ethnicities." From these instances, it is clear that an ethnic group is not an immutable, stable community, but changes frequently over the course of history. I will not elaborate here on the theories of this.

(6) The integration of the Chinese nation took place gradually over time. It seems that each region separately developed its own core culture and achieved an initial level of integration. For example, in the Neolithic Age, there were a number of centers of civilization in the middle and lower reaches of the Yellow River that gradually merged to form the first level of integration of the Huaxia people, predecessors of the Han. At the same time, the tribes on the grasslands beyond the barrier of the Great Wall were ruled by the Xiongnu, forming their own integrated entity which opposed the Huaxia and later the Han. Numerous incursions by the northern peoples into the Central Plains and the expansion of the Han people outward gradually evolved into two distinct, separate integrated cultures: the agrarian and the nomadic. Another process of population migrations and displacements, mixing and division brought the Han together into a large core, still primarily settled in the Central Plains and the basins suitable for agriculture. Simultaneously, Han people migrated outward to border areas to open land for farming and engaged in trade and commerce in the non-Han areas, creating a network of settlements and transport routes that connected all the peoples of East Asia. This is how the de facto Chinese entity came into being, shaping into an integrated national configuration. In the course of joint resistance to the onslaught of Western powers, a conscious sense of national entity then took shape, uniting all in the face of trials and tribulations. This Chinese entity is made up of 55 different ethnic groups, a configuration of diversity within integration. Each group is called an "ethnicity," but they are not on the same levels, since many can be further divided into sublevels of "ethnic groupings." We can say that the integrated Chinese nation is diverse, composed of many different levels, each having experienced dynamic and varied processes of joining and division, of separation without splitting, and of mixing without assimilating. These are all highly interesting subjects of research for ethnographers.

9.12 Looking Toward the Future

Will the configuration of the Chinese nation change? Will its internal dynamics shift? At this point one can only speculate.

However, it must first be pointed out that two very important qualitative changes have taken place, even before the Chinese nation stepped into the twenty-first century.

The first is the elimination of the centuries-old inequality between ethnic groups. Not only has this been rectified by law, it has also been effectively put into practice. Since 1949 after the founding of New China, equality of all ethnic groups has been a fundamental policy and is enshrined in the constitution. To implement this principle, the Law on Regional Autonomy for Minority Nationalities has been enacted. Wherever there are concentrated, compact communities of minority peoples, autonomous districts are set up with their own administrative organs to manage local affairs. Languages and customs must be respected, and the minority inhabitants themselves decide on any changes. For historical reasons, minorities have lagged behind in cultural and economic development, so the government has promulgated a series of preferential policies, which is why so many people who used to hide their origins are now eager to openly reclaim them.

The second important change is that China has embarked on a path of industrialization and modernization. Opening up and reform are basic national policies, and isolation and seclusion are gone forever. This shift from agriculture to industrialization is raising new problems for all ethnic groups. Assuming that my description and analysis above are historically correct, then the Han people who have flourished and prospered thanks to agriculture must first and foremost face the challenge of radically changing their economic structures. The places they have historically inhabited have been suitable for farming, but are poor in the resources for industrialization. In contrast, the less attractive places, which have always been the homelands of the minority groups, are rich in resources for industry. Industrialization also requires technology and knowledge, but the minorities generally lack these skills, so it is very difficult for them to exploit their natural resources to develop local industry. How will this affect the ethnic configuration?

To adhere to the principles of equality and common prosperity for all peoples requires concrete measures to promote mutual assistance and unity between all ethnicities. These are the issues we should be exploring now.

Allowing unrestricted competition between different ethnic groups, regardless of their starting level, will predictably mean that the weaker, less advanced ones will be pushed aside and eventually wiped out. The "diversity" within the integration will gradually disappear. We cannot accept this option, which is why we have adopted the principle of "the more developed help the less developed" with economic, cultural, and other assistance to boost their development. The national government has preferential policies directed at the regions of the minority groups and also provides practical assistance. This is what we have been doing.

Out of these two changes, a third issue now arises. Will modernization of the minorities lead to their greater "Hanization"? Will greater common prosperity tend toward more homogenization, so that the pluralist component of "diversity within integration" will be diluted? This is certainly a possibility. However, I see things as follows: generally speaking, as a society becomes more affluent, its members have more opportunities to express their individuality; conversely, the poorer a society, the more limited the lifestyle choices. If this can be applied to minorities, then, as their economies grow and modernize, they will have more opportunities to make the most of their unique strengths. Industrialization will inevitably bring many similar

things into their lives, for instance, a common language will be necessary for exchanging information, yet this should not prevent peoples from using their own languages and scripts to create their national literatures. A lingua franca can help peoples to learn from and influence each other and so enrich their own national literatures and cultures. Another example of how minorities can make the most of their distinctive abilities is the fact that they have all adapted well to their physical environments. This gives them an advantage; for instance, the Tibetans who are able to live and work at very high altitudes should naturally be the drivers of development on the high plateau. As their region develops, exchanges with other places and peoples will raise the general economic level of all and make everyone better off. If we take note of these issues early enough, I am convinced we will be able to face the later challenges. As modernization proceeds, we will build on the spirit of unity and mutual assistance between all ethnic groups, to work toward a common prosperity so that the configuration of "diversity within integration" will move to a higher level. Then, the Chinese nation will be like a huge garden filled with hundreds of varieties of gorgeous flowers. This is the image that encourages me and which I would like to leave you with today.

August 22, 1988

Chapter 10
Challenges Facing Chinese Culture in the New Century

I am very honored to be attending this "International Forum on Chinese Culture and the 21st Century." I know I shall learn a great deal. Ever since I joined the China Yanhuang Culture Research Society, I have keenly felt my lack of a deep understanding of our Yanhuang or what we usually call our Chinese culture, and so I am eager to learn as much as possible from scholars and experts present here. I shall take an active part because I believe that not only will the discussion satisfy my own desire to learn more but, more importantly, will help us understand how our culture should adjust to the practical requirements of future development.

Each individual lives in a culture constructed by generations of forebears and relies for existence upon the material and spiritual goods that it has produced. Life unfolds within a society built upon human relationships. In the last few centuries, there have been rapid and momentous shifts, and societies and the whole world are changing fast. The cultures we rely upon for survival must adapt to this dynamic situation. Today, all cultures are facing challenging choices to change, and their survival may depend upon them. Chinese culture is no exception.

As I see it, Chinese culture in the new century faces an urgent task of "looking over the old to bring forth the new" so that it can develop further. As inheritors of the past and members of the Chinese nation today, our first task must be to review and understand our legacy in a matter-of-fact way. An individual must have self-knowledge and so must a culture. This "cultural self-awareness" comes from an understanding of the entire history of Chinese civilization, as well as the world in which it evolved. Embarking on this at the moment of transition from the twentieth to the twenty-first century will certainly deepen our understanding of what we have experienced in China and in the world and will be of practical significance.

Cultural self-awareness means that those who live in a specific culture obtain self-knowledge by understanding where their culture came from, how it has been

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shaped, what makes i t distinctive, and where it is going. This self-knowledge is necessary in order to have the ability to make conscious choices to adapt to new times and circumstances that are affecting the culture. I have been following the process of reforms and opening up over the past 20 years. The profound changes that have occurred in Chinese society and economy have convinced me that we are indeed on the road of socialism with Chinese characteristics as described by Comrade Deng Xiaoping. The "four modernizations"[1] are opening up a new era of development, prosperity, culture, and wealth. These last two decades of the twentieth century have witnessed the rapid and sustained growth of China's economy and have spurred a vitality and dynamism in Chinese society unseen since the Opium War (1840–1842). Coming precisely at the transition point between the old and new millennia, this dynamism is providing us with the material resources and the confidence we need to make those conscious cultural choices in the new era, as well as to play a bigger role in the evolution of a new world culture.

Throughout its history, Chinese culture has demonstrated great inclusiveness, but not at all times. The fullest manifestation of this quality occurred in certain historical periods, the most notable being the Spring and Autumn and Warring States Periods (770–221 BC) and the Han (206 BC–AD 220), Sui (581–618), and Tang (618–907) dynasties, when inclusiveness reached its height. From this we can conclude that the best cultural characteristics prevail when the nation is strong. We have every reason to believe that, in the new century, China will enter a period of national strength and wealth, so we should also realize that a new historical opportunity is appearing for those living in this period to give full play to the uniqueness of our culture.

At specific times in history, a new trend emerges in a certain place, created by a certain group of people. I believe this new trend now is cultural self-awareness. There are now many signs that nations around the world all want to know more about their own cultures and are asking questions about themselves: Why do we live like this? What does it mean? How should we live and what are our goals? How do we achieve them? The humanities and social sciences are duty bound to provide answers. Natural science has progressed very fast, biological research means we can now plot our own genome, and technology allows us to extend our reach from Earth to outer space. We in the social sciences and humanities must keep up with the times and work hard to understand our own cultures. It seems to me this desire is already taking shape in many advanced countries. Here in China, we must not miss this historical opportunity to join and promote this new trend. Starting in the Renaissance and up to the nineteenth century, "human self-awareness" developed in the West, an important stage in mankind's cultural development. In the twenty-first century, it looks as if there will be surge of "mankind's cultural self-awareness," representing a new chapter in the history of civilization. The Chinese people with their own cultural self-knowledge should be a part of this.

The historical realities of the twentieth century will have an important effect on the trend toward cultural self-awareness in the new century. I was born in 1910 so

[1] Modernizations of industry, agriculture, national defense, and science and technology.

my life spans the whole twentieth century. My personal experiences and impressions as a lifelong social anthropologist concerned with sociocultural changes can all bear witness to this period.

"The planet is getting smaller" is the deepest impression I have from my life experience. Seventy to eighty years ago, my maternal grandmother seemed to live very far away. It took a whole day on the Grand Canal in a little wooden skiff rowed by hand to get to her house 15 km away. We would leave in the morning, have lunch on the boat, and arrive at dusk. Now there is a highway and if there are no traffic jams, it takes under 20 min to get there. Distance is now measured in time. This example illustrates the most profound effect modernity has on human relationships, that is, the shortening of distances between people. More frequent contacts over a wider area have closely connected mankind into a huge global society.

Another very deep impression is war. Two so-called world wars were waged in the first 50 years of the twentieth century. Previously there had never been war on such a worldwide scale. By now, the inhabitants of this planet have become so closely linked that they even "speak" to each other with guns on a global scale. War is confrontation, but confrontation is also a kind of unbreakable bond. Conflict over interests can never occur between isolated entities, so confrontation is an expression of a link, and always ends in a union where the bonds are even tighter.

I am reminded of the Warring States Period (475–221 BC) in Chinese history when many rulers jostled for hegemony. I have likened world history of the twentieth century to this period. The analogy is probably not totally appropriate, but I think there is a similar hidden trend that we need to note, and that is the world is moving from a fractured state toward the integration of globalization. The concept of "one world" was proposed during World War II. Over 2,000 years ago, the struggles for hegemony in Chinese history paved the way for unification under the Qin dynasty (221–206 BC), a concept that lies at the heart of Chinese unity today. Seen from this perspective, I think it was no coincidence that the concept of "one world" was proposed during World War II. Perhaps it is a logical result and shows that this period of hegemonic struggle is preparing mankind for the new large global society.

A fruitful topic for deeper inquiry in this modern age could be the distinctive feature of inclusiveness within Chinese civilization. It could be a useful starting point in our process to achieve cultural self-awareness. The familiar concept of "one country, two systems"[2] not only demonstrates this inclusive quality vividly but also bears the stamp of our times and has wide influence. I believe that its successful implementation not only has political significance but, since it involves whether or not two different social systems can tolerate each other and coexist, also has cultural implications. It is a novel and important idea, and its application is a very important experiment at the end of the twentieth century. It offers a good example of a rational approach to multiculturalism in the new century. Under most circumstances, capitalism and socialism are at opposite poles and diametrically at odds. Their confrontation

[2] Proposed by Deng Xiaoping as the principle for the return of Hong Kong in 1997 after 150 years of British colonial rule.

over the decades of the Cold War was the most outstanding historical event of the twentieth century. Yet in China they can coexist. Possibly "one country, two systems" is an indication of the continuing evolution of Chinese culture's inherent inclusiveness. One knows a leopard from its spots, so this experience should give us confidence that, as world culture develops, different systems can coexist peacefully and that it is possible to have a unity of opposites. All that has happened since the return of Hong Kong is evidence that different social systems can coexist peacefully and that in the process, they not only become more complementary but also push each other forward. Time may show that this could gradually become a long-term system for sustainable development and prosperity.

We have still not been able to explain fully how the whole process from conception to final implementation of "one country, two systems" may have been influenced by the inherent inclusiveness of Chinese culture. I do not doubt there are many distinctive elements within our culture that could help to resolve some of the very real and difficult problems facing mankind. I believe this is indisputable, otherwise how to explain the enormous dynamism and vigor over 5,000 years of history? The task now is to discover and lay out these elements, which is what cultural self-awareness is all about.

This inclusiveness is closely linked with the cultural value of "harmony with diversity" proposed by our ancient sages. "Harmony with diversity" is the same as "diverse yet complementary," which describes the fusing power of Chinese culture, one of the reasons for its uninterrupted development through the ages. In my paper "Diversity Within Integration—Configuration of the Chinese Nation" (see Issue 2, Chap. 3), I proposed the role of "diversity within integration" in the course of the formation of the Chinese nation. My colleagues have expressed wide agreement and support for this theory. According to it, the many different cultures that mixed and melded to form Chinese civilization influenced and borrowed from each other to eventually build together our traditional culture of "harmony with diversity." This historical development has given us a deep appreciation of diverse and rich cultural forms, a belief in cultural dialogue and blending. Spreading this attitude out to the rest of the world would mean that different cultures respect and talk to each other, thus enhancing their own development.

If we probe further, we find that Chinese culture has its own unique attitude toward relations with different peoples and cultures. From ancient times, the ideal has been to rule by benevolence and righteousness, not by force. As stated by Mencius, "Using force to convince is the way of might, using righteousness to convince is the way of benevolent government." Interpersonal relations too should be moral, benevolent, and considerate. From ancient times down to the present, *Confucian Analects* have been respected as the words of a sage, which means that most people willingly accept his precepts for human interactions. These ideas can continue to have a positive effect in modern society. The behavioral values of "put yourself in another's shoes," "not to do to others what you do not wish done to yourself," and "treat other's elderly as I treat my own, treat other's children as I treat my own" build mutual respect, tolerance, restraint, and common benefit so that cooperation is possible. People bound together by ethics and morality are very stable,

which is why we say "using righteousness to convince others is the way of benevolent government." I believe these experiences of Chinese history and culture can provide valuable insights as we try to build a new peaceful order in the twenty-first century.

However, what I have described above falls far short of what I consider a satisfactory level of cultural self-awareness, because it is merely a superficial understanding, nowhere near a really deep one. Based on my long personal experience, I strongly believe that we still lack a systematic, fact-based understanding of this ancient Chinese culture in which we live. We "experience" our social life, but we don't really "understand" it. And yet, at the same time, we are living through a period of global cultural transition, so it's no wonder we are perplexed. This is an unavoidable challenge for Chinese culture in the new century. We must adopt a spirit of scientific inquiry and empirical study and deploy positivist methods so that we gain a true knowledge and understanding of our ancient civilization.

All cultures transmitted down through history are of equal value. Confucius believed that "education knows no social distinctions," and when he found that his ideas were disregarded in the Central Plains, he considered taking a boat and sailing away to settle in a foreign land. He certainly had no feelings of "Chinese cultural centrism." This is also one of our fine traditions. Today, when there is such an urgent need for cultural self-awareness, we must carry on this tradition and look upon all world cultures equally. All have played positive roles in mankind's development, and all have failings too. As we examine and understand the many changes in cultures over time, we should adopt a discerning attitude so as to identify and preserve the best and discard the dross. Existing cultures have the right to make choices as they adapt to the new environment. Any kind of "cultural centrism" must be rejected. In order to exercise this right to choose, all cultures must first achieve self-awareness, and they should all seek the wisdom of self-knowledge. That's why such self-awareness is so important at this time.

However, this is no easy task. The first step is to know one's own culture and make choices to adapt to the new circumstances. The second step is to understand the other cultures one encounters, to be able to select, absorb, and assimilate the best from them. Once all cultures have achieved this self-knowledge, the conditions will be created for them to meet and consciously blend to form a common basic order, within which all cultures can coexist peacefully, give full play to their strengths, and work together for development.

As members of the Chinese nation, we have a duty to learn and understand our civilization and to study the foundations of our traditions so that we can create a modern Chinese culture, in preparation for the new world culture of the future.

September 1, 1998

Chapter 11
Toward a Higher Culture

Today is the opening session of the Symposium on 100 Years of Traditional Handicrafts, organized jointly by the journal *Décor*, the Beijing Academy of Handicraft Art, and the Jingdezhen Institute of Ceramic Folk Art. I have been asked to give an academic presentation, but I must tell you that what I am going to say is more of a conversation with you, nothing formal or academic.

Last year I reached the official age of retirement, but I am continuing to work because I have a number of projects that are still not finished. I was once asked, "What do you wish to do in your life?" and on my 80th birthday I was able to say, "Work for the benefit of the people." When I look back over my life's work, I see that I have always tried to make ordinary people's lives a bit better. These last few years, I have been to many places in China on study tours, and I have seen that the eastern parts are pretty developed, but there is a marked drop in the central regions. Along the eastern coast, farmers have an annual income of about 5,000 yuan, but in the central regions like Jiangxi, they only earn half as much, about 2,000 yuan. I have been thinking about how these places can improve, and I see an opportunity presenting itself. After the opening of the Beijing-Jiujiang Railway, I visited along the route, and it seemed to me that the line could be used to promote economic development. We often say "to develop first build a road." Well, the road is there now, but there are many cases where this is not enough. The monks of Shaolin Temple have an old expression "wine and meat slide straight through," meaning that their bodies do not absorb them, so they have no effect. The railway could be the same thing: go straight through without benefiting anybody. Instead, I would like it to be like the stick linking candied haws on a Popsicle, stringing the towns together, so that a series of medium-sized cities would grow up along it.

Opening speech at the 99th Symposium on 100 Years of Traditional Handicrafts, convened by the Jingdezhen Institute of Ceramic Folk Art. Participants were Japanese and Chinese specialists in the theory of handicraft art. This text is based on the audio recording made by Fang Lili, published in *National Art*, 2000.

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Sixty years ago, I began my research in the countryside studying villages, but by the late 1980s, I had come to the conclusion that the rural economy alone was not enough to improve life for the peasants and that the cities are needed to drive the countryside forward. If the towns grow, then the villages around will not let the "meat and wine slide through." That's why during the past couple of years, I have gone to study these towns. Last year, I went to Anhui, Hubei, and the cities of Nanchang and Jiujiang in Jiangxi. This year I visited Ganzhou in southern Jiangxi. I wanted to link the cities together like the haws on a stick. I think Ganzhou has development potential. From there I looped over to the Beijing-Guangzhou Railway and followed that to Zhuzhou, and that's where I thought of you here in Jingdezhen. The Zhuzhou locals told me that 20 years ago it was a very small place of only 7,000 people, but today it has grown to a medium-sized town of one million. That's very fast growth over a period of two decades. It occurred to me that Zhuzhou in Hunan is very similar to you here in Jingdezhen in Jiangxi. If you were able to develop, you could become another Zhuzhou. What's more, Jingdezhen is well known for its long cultural history, so you could develop by combining tradition with technology. After Deng Xiaoping's southern tour, national development accelerated,, and Zhuzhou is a good example of the kind of growth resulting from the induction of a number of large hi-tech companies. Jingdezhen must do the same thing; you must have a number of big enterprises with an annual output value of around one billion that will stabilize the city. I was really pleased to hear what Party Secretary Shu (of Jingdezhen) said just now because I had no idea you were doing so well.

I used to believe that Chinese civilization originated north of the Yellow River. Now, after many study tours, I realize that the south was also a major source. Last year I went to Changsha (in Hunan province) and visited Mawangdui[1] from which a large number of inscribed bamboo slips have been unearthed. They have not all been deciphered yet, but they already tell us that Changsha was once part of the State of Wu,[2] a very strong ancient culture that has not been given the attention it deserves. Because the Xia (c. 2070–1600 BC), Shang (1600–1046 BC), and Zhou (1046–256 BC) dynasties were all north of the Yellow River, we have always focused on them. There is no question that one of the sources of Chinese civilization was north of the Yellow River, and many archaeological finds prove this. However, the areas south of the Yangtze River were also important centers, though evidence is still patchy. Already 7,000 years ago, the Hemudu Culture cultivated rice, and remains of silk have been found showing that weaving also existed. Around Lake Taihu, excavations of the Liangzhu Culture indicate that there was a wide belt of civilization, showing that culture was advanced in the Yangtze River basin. Both the Wu and Yue cultures were highly sophisticated, and it is said that paddy culture was centered in this area. There is another saying that this rice culture spreads overseas and evolved into the earliest Japanese civilization. However that may be, it certainly influenced thousands of years of Chinese history. Today, Jiangxi is part of southern China and must have lain within the borders of the State of Wu, so your local culture

[1] Ancient Western Han dynasty tomb from 100 BC.

[2] One of the feudal states of the Zhou dynasty that lasted from 1200 to 473 BC.

surely contains elements of this heritage, visible today in the traditional silk culture of Jiangxi and Zhejiang. Historically, Zhejiang was also the home of pottery, and the earthenware fired in Yue kilns was known far and wide. It was only later that the industry declined and moved to Jiangxi. Silk and porcelain are the two most well-known Chinese handicrafts, with a long history that continues to evolve, since they are intertwined with local economic development today.

The theme of our symposium is to look back over a century of traditional handicrafts. Last night I had a long conversation with Fang Lili. I said that though I know very little about the history of handicrafts, I feel that the south should have a prominent place in this research. I believe that traditional Chinese culture stems from two sources, one in the north and one in the south, and that they complement each other. This is the theoretical basis of my theory of Chinese cultural evolution of "diversity within integration." A lot has already been unearthed from our northern civilization, but work has only just begun in the south, and I expect there to be new historical discoveries in the next 20 years. Once the bamboo slips of Changsha are deciphered, there will also be new interpretations of Chinese history, just as years ago the discovery of oracle bone script greatly changed the perspectives of historians. However, since I know little about either the history or evolution of handicrafts, I can only talk about the present and the future. So while you discuss the past in general, I, more narrowly, will only talk about Jingdezhen today and tomorrow. This seems to be stepping away from the theme of our conference, and that's always a bad idea, but I have to say that my academic work has always been about stepping outside boundaries: I am an anthropologist, but I have gone beyond that, and the same applies to my work in the field of history. My degree is in anthropology, which encompasses everything that has to do with human activity, such as archaeology and art. I once wrote an article titled "Words from Outside the Circle" by which I meant that I don't belong to any specific academic circle, so I have no set format for writing. (Comment from the audience: "That's not overstepping anything, its innovation.") Well, that's quite true; one can't create anything new if one is stuck in a rut.

Fang Lili is from Jingdezhen and has a firm background in academic research and theory. She wanted to examine art from an anthropological perspective, so after completing her doctorate at the Central Academy of Art, she went to Peking University's Institute of Sociology and Anthropology for postgraduate work. Though retired, I continue as an academic advisor at the Institute, and it is her study of Jingdezhen that has brought me here today. I have visited here twice, the last time a couple of years ago when I only stayed a few days. My interest in pottery and other handicrafts actually began many years ago, shortly after 1949, when I was Vice Provost of Tsinghua University and in charge of the humanities. I was interested in the handicrafts of Beijing and wanted to do a study of Beijing cloisonné. Comrade Peng Zhen was mayor at the time, and we met to discuss the project, but it fell through because I was transferred to the National Minorities Commission to study our ethnic minority peoples. In the course of those studies, we collected a number of artifacts and handicrafts from different groups. I say this now to show that I am not totally unfamiliar with handicrafts.

Some say the Japanese stole our technology for making cloisonné and later improved on it. I believe that culture is always going to spread. From the angle of commerce, we lost a patent, but from the angle of cultural diffusion, it's normal for cultures to meet, exchange, and improve because naturally there will be comparisons and rivalry. Culture does not fear any of this, and aren't we now learning Western hi-tech using other people's things to develop ourselves? Why shouldn't others take our traditional arts and improve on them? I see nothing wrong at all, because I believe cultures should learn from each other; that way we can all grow. This is a law of cultural development.

Fang Lili's study describes something that seems very important to me and that is that some of the pottery making here has returned to family-style production (comment from another speaker, "Jingdezhen's self-employed"), quite right, the self-employed. We must not dismiss this form of economy, because theoretically speaking it makes a lot of sense. Let us recall the path taken from the people's communes to redistribution of land back to the family and then on to the household production responsibility system.[3] I remember Comrade Hu Yaobang[4] saying to me, "Don't forget, the most powerful social unit in Chinese society is the family." This is exactly what I had found in my earliest investigations. My first book was called *Peasant Life in China—A Field Study of Country Life in the Yangtze Valley*[5] in which the first chapter is on "The Family." This is the basic cell in Chinese social organization. Later, I developed these ideas in *Systems of Reproduction*.[6] These concepts grew out of my earliest research, but I am still exploring how they can be used to cope with a number of other problems. For example, at this time, many people have been made redundant and the first thing they do is return to their family. I myself, now that I am retired, also rely on my daughter and her family. In many Eastern cultures, "the family" and "the clan" play extremely important roles. All of you study handicrafts and propose to promote them, because in fact they are an important form of household production with a great deal of potential. Why is the family the basic social unit and a driver of production? That's a very long story and not easy to explain. However, when properly used, the family has great initiative, the result of thousands of years of culture, and we know this because we feel different when we return to our family. In Kunshan, I visited a village enterprise making children's strollers. The brand name was "Good Kid." It was worth several hundred billion yuan, but had started out with just a couple of hundred thousand. Many such enterprises may start small, but once they find their market and fulfill the needs of the culture, they grow fast. In the Chinese context, activities that start with the family lead to growth and a market.

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[3] Initiated in 1980, this major policy redistributed the land to rural households that undertook to cultivate it and sell their produce to the state according to a contract.

[4] 1915–1989, formerly General Secretary of the Chinese Communist Party and a key figure in the early days of the reforms after 1978. He resigned after criticism by more conservative members of the Party.

[5] London: Routledge, 1939.

[6] In Chinese, *Shengyu zhidu* (《生育制度》), Beijing: The Commercial Press, 1999.

Let me give you another example with pottery. On one of my study tours in Shandong, I met a very successful businessman who had started out as a peddler of earthen bowls. He used to carry his wares on a pole from village to village. Business was good because, as he said, all families use pottery utensils that break easily, and the villagers needed many earthen bowls for drinking tea. He did a brisk trade and this was the beginning of a whole village getting into the business, which has now grown into a large enterprise driving economic growth in the whole locality. This shows that not only must we have artistic pottery but daily-use ceramics as well, things that farmers need. Of course, in the future, farmers will also want works of art, but not quite yet because their incomes are only around 2,000 yuan a year. So this is where you (addressed to the Party Secretary of Jingdezhen) come in: how to get your rural population from 2,000 to 5,000 yuan a year, so they catch up with the coastal areas and southern Jiangsu. I think once incomes go up by that amount, the market will change dramatically. There is huge potential in Jingdezhen: you have a wonderful treasure here, rather like having a beautiful daughter hidden away in your house. Once "she" comes out and is recognized by the public, you must let "her" make her way in the world. To satisfy people, we must first develop the market by identifying the demand. Farmers are the biggest market and they need ceramics for everyday use. You should fulfill this growing need and build upon your traditions. Fang Lili's study also told me that new technologies are being used here now, and this is in line with our development model of combining tradition with science and technology. Firing is the main process in pottery making, because it is the high temperatures that cause the chemical changes in the materials. Your kilns now have shifted from burning wood to burning gas. So this part of production can definitely draw upon modern technology.

We must be imaginative in the use of hi-tech. Let me give you an example that is a bit long perhaps, but nonetheless interesting. I have a friend called Lin Lanying who is a member of the Standing Committee of the People's National Congress. She first studied transistors in the United States. When she returned to China, we did not have transistors, so she started working on them here. She has since focused on creating gallium arsenide monocrystals which require a very high heat unattainable on earth. The only way to reach these temperatures is in space, so she used the temporary laboratory conditions in an orbiting satellite to grow the crystal and produce a new material. For this she was awarded the Fok Ying Tung Award. I cite this example to show that we must step beyond the customary and we must be creative, think outside the box, and if the earth is not enough, we can now go into space!

After recalling the last century of handicraft history, you must also move on, step outside the limits of the past to cast our eyes wider and further, and gain new ideas and knowledge in the new era. I hope the results of your discussions here will not only be a review of the past 100 years but also a looking forward to a new and better future. After all, recalling the past is in order to go beyond it and to innovate. Without the old to build on, it's hard to make anything new, which brings me back to combining tradition with science and technology. I hope, through this meeting that you will see the future without forgetting the past, since the future is built upon the past. This conference is precisely to consider how we can push handicrafts to a new level on the basis of combining traditions with new scientific techniques and knowledge.

Finally, let me talk about the future of Chinese handicrafts. I give you the example of Suzhou Institute of Embroidery. They have succeeded in using Suzhou silk embroidery to create very real-looking traditional ink-and-wash paintings. Not only are the forms and shapes reproduced but, more importantly, the charm and feeling of the painting. They have done this by inventing a new kind of "blurry stitch" in which each silken thread is divided into several strands. The result is neither an outline nor a specific tint, but a "blurred" effect, which gives the same sensation as ink and wash. This is a high level of artistry. What's more, this is not like the brushwork of Qi Baishi who I don't think even reached this level. Human culture cannot be looked at simply from a utilitarian angle; as humans our needs and desires are more than just practical things. We need to "step out of line" and transcend the ordinary. Take food, for instance. It's not just a question of nutrition or health, there is taste as well. I have visited many countries and have asked many foreigners, "Do you understand *xian*?" I have not found a suitable English word for *xian*, and foreigners don't seem to understand the term, but we Chinese do. When I visited the Hezhe people in the Northwest, they invited me to eat with them. The Hezhe people are fishermen and this meal of fish was exquisitely *xian*. Foreigners only know whether things taste good, but *xian* is something more than that, so being nutritious is not enough; it must have a flavor that represents a more refined level of cooking, just as art is a higher level of life.

When I say "a better life for people," I mean the basics of food and shelter. This is the first kind of need. But the second is more than just having enough to eat; there must also be *xian*, flavor. This is not limited to psychological or material stimuli; it is a sensation, a feeling that is often very hard to express in words. Put another way, a full stomach and flavor are on two different levels. Fine art must focus on the *xian*. It's like looking at a painting where the likeness is not enough; there should be something more, a sensation that lies between "the being and the nonbeing," between "the imagined and the real," which raises the level of cultural and hence artistic refinement. However, most people are not at this level yet, so we can only talk about practicality and technique, not flavor or art. When we Chinese say "art," we mean the six arts of Confucius, not six techniques, because art and technique are quite different.

This understanding of art I learned from Liang Sicheng.[7] In those days during the War Against Japanese Aggression in the 1940s, we were close neighbors and saw a lot of each other. He used to say an architect is not the same as a craftsman, and technique is not enough; there has to be feeling, in other words, art. Technique is about getting things right and accurate, but art has nothing to do with being right or accurate; it is a kind of feeling that everyone has but that is often very hard to express. Art is a kind of spirit, a rhythm, an energy, and a mood; it's not material or concrete. Our customary division into material and spiritual civilizations is

[7] 1901–1972. Major architect, author of several works on classical Chinese architecture. Liang researched the history of Chinese architecture and strongly advocated its conservation. He was a member of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences and professor at Tsinghua University and participated in the urban planning of Beijing after 1949.

oversimplified. Spiritual civilization can be further split into two levels, one of basic sensations such as pain or discomfort and the other of spirit, in other words, a crystallization of natural emotion and thought that is released in a form of beauty. This is very difficult; artists are often the only ones who can achieve this. If all of us, no matter which field we are in, could work toward this higher realm and not remain purely at the scientific and technical levels, the world would be a different place altogether. Of course, this is asking a bit too much at this point, and we still have to rely on science and technology to build our country. Maybe in another couple of generations we will experience a new artistic upsurge, and an artistic renaissance will revitalize the nation. All of you in the art world can describe this much better than I, but I too can sense these things that extend beyond the ordinary physical and psychological limits. This is what you should be studying. The search for a better life, I believe, should not be limited only to having enough to eat and wear.

Recently, I have been asking myself, after a better life then what? It's true I have devoted myself to achieving this material improvement, but then is that enough? People will not be satisfied only with basics. People wish to live and work in peace and experience enjoyment on a higher level, which of course, must have a material foundation, because no one can do this on an empty stomach. So it is this level of culture that you artists should be exploring. My teachers did not talk about such things, only about the basics, about satisfying the needs of existence. But what are these needs? Apart from the material things, there is art. The need for art is very hard to express in ordinary language, and most people are not aware of it, only you artists are. We ordinary souls are still at the basic material stage. It's rather like the steps from speech to poetry to song to music. This is a very interesting process. After all, everyone can speak, but not everyone can write poetry or songs. Music is similar: I can tell the difference between sounds, but to know whether they are pleasant or satisfying, I need to learn music. This is not merely a sensory stimulus but a sense of musicality that not everyone has, though it can be cultivated. I feel that art is at the higher levels of culture, but I cannot say much more because that's as far as my own sensations go. So that's why I have focused on trying to improve material life for ordinary people, since I can relate to them not having enough to eat and wear. I don't really know how to describe what should come after that. But I feel it and I must express it so that we can strive toward it and promote culture to reach the higher realm of art.

Let me give you an example of my experience in Yangzhou. For centuries Yangzhou has been one of the most prosperous and vibrant cities south of the Yangtze River, much celebrated in classical poetry. The first time I visited was before 1949. I went deep into the alleyways of the town to listen to street artists playing and singing. Hearing the flute played at midnight is a very moving experience, and it produces a sensation of dreaming, of floating into another world very hard to describe. That kind of sensation is gone today, and everybody sings karaoke instead. I believe that mankind's ultimate desire is to enter into a world of art, to achieve spiritual and emotional enjoyment and pleasure. This is the direction of culture in which you artists must lead us. We must not be satisfied merely with the science of the material world, with whether missiles are accurate or not, and we

must pursue the beauty of the world of the spirit and of sensations that transcend the purely physical. Did I describe that clearly?

Our culture is facing a challenge today. There are two very different paths to development, and perhaps they represent the difference between East and West. However, it's too early now to talk about attaining the height of Eastern culture, since satisfying material needs of food, shelter, and work is necessary first before bringing art into ordinary life. Who will bring the art? It's you, our artists. Artists are not interested in machine culture, scales of production, and lowering costs; artists want to add to the cost by investing nonmaterial resources and devoting a whole life to a belief, a pursuit even if it means never reaching it. A whole life's investment is huge indeed! These are the two different directions of two different worlds and cultures, two different ways of achieving full humanity. Of course, what I am saying is about looking ahead. Actually, it also means we have to look back to Chinese traditions too, because I believe that Chinese culture contains elements that approach this highest level of art.

On my way to this conference, I was pondering the subject of art and the higher levels of human culture. But I am getting too old, so I can only hope that one day culture will shift from the pursuit of the material to pursuit of the spiritual. These are not in opposition; of course, art must also have foundations in science, must employ the fruits of hi-tech, and must combine them appropriately. But that will be for you to figure out, not me!

Today, I have rather let myself go and rambled off our main topic. However, I have been quite inspired by what I have seen on the ground here in Jingdezhen, and my musings and conjectures are based on that. I hope what I have said will make everyone recognize that Jingdezhen has an important economic and cultural future ahead with many possibilities. I want this ancient capital of pottery to build upon the artistic achievements of its past. For centuries, China's most famous handicrafts have been porcelain and silk. The Institute of Pottery in Jingdezhen could set up contacts with the Suzhou Institute of Silk Textile Technology to exchange ideas, learn from each other, create, and innovate. By working together, you will raise China's handicrafts to a higher level and contribute to mankind's pursuit of art and culture.

Thank you.

Sept. 1999

Part IV

Chapter 12
Rethinking the Relationship Between Man and Nature in Culture Theory

I am here today specially to celebrate the centenary of Nanjing University in Jiangsu province, which is also my home province since I was born in Wujiang. I am now 92 years old, and it is a great honor for me at this advanced age to still be able to attend these celebrations.

The founding of this university 100 years ago was an extremely important event, because it represented the initial success of reforms in the Chinese educational system and opened the way for China's modernization. This is significant and worthy of celebration. By reform of the educational system, I mean the elimination of the old imperial examination system and the establishment of the new school system. I myself am a product of that new system, and I well remember the efforts of my parents to advance those reforms.

My father took part in them in his hometown. He sat for the last round of imperial exams and became a *xiucai*, but with their elimination, he accepted a scholarship provided by the local government to study in Japan. Upon his return, he set up a middle school in the county seat. My mother established the first kindergarten in my hometown, in those days called a *mengyang yuan*. All of this was known as "foreign schooling" and was very novel. These were the achievements of the generation that came before mine, which laid the foundation for China's modernization.

My education began under the new system, and I often proudly say that I am totally a product of it. This new schooling was in sharp contrast to the traditional private academy that prepared students for the imperial examinations, and it has basically continued down to this day, demonstrating great vitality. From childhood on, I attended classes with children of my own age, where we learned and played together. This was very different from the old ways. Teaching methods and materials were also very different. We were no longer required to recite ancient texts, nor did we start off with the classics like the *Confucian Analects* or *The Works of*

Speech at the centenary celebration of Nanjing University

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Mencius. Instead, my first schoolbook, as I recall, was published by the Commercial Press, and the first lesson taught the characters for "person, hand, foot, knife, ruler." Today, there are very few people still around who started learning to read and write with this textbook, but such small things back then have had a huge influence on how our culture has advanced since. I cite this little story here at this centenary celebration because I believe we should remember such things.

The laws of human development determined that Chinese culture needed to reform and move ahead. This had been brewing for a long time, from the beginning of the Wuxu Reform Movement (1898) at the end of the Qing dynasty (1644–1911) over a hundred years ago. This movement was initiated by a group of intellectuals who wished to emulate Japan and introduce Western culture. In the beginning, it was a half-hearted attempt at "Chinese culture for the basics, Western culture for practical use," a state of mind that both desired and disdained Western culture. However, once the door was opened, Western ideas came pouring in, shattering all obstacles erected by the national culture, and by the time of the 1919 May Fourth Movement after the Xinhai Republican Revolution (1911),[1] some people were openly advocating "total Westernization." Chinese civilization that had held itself apart for thousands of years could no longer resist. After the May Fourth Movement, there was a general trend to accept Western culture and to learn from *Mr. De* (democracy) and *Mr. Sai* (science). These are all undeniable historical facts. The present call for "modernization" now is in fact a continuation of this historical trend. Even popular revolutionary movements to free the Chinese people from second-class status in the world have been guided by the Western political thinking of Karl Marx. Learning from the West has brought outstanding achievements.

In this process, there have been both moderates and opponents. The moderates advocate selective introduction of Western culture, while the opponents argue that it has already reached a dead end, and it is time now for the East to lead the way. The notion of alternating roles of "you today, me tomorrow," as well as arguments in favor and against, is quite common in intellectual circles. However, in an increasingly integrated world, it is time we really take a serious look at the future of our Chinese culture.

In the 1930s, I entered the field of social anthropology and became an academic. Cultural trends should have been my main subject of research, because no one can ignore the future of his own traditional culture. However, this was a very complex and difficult puzzle for me, and my ideas were strongly influenced by the kind of Western-style education I had received as described above. Starting in the 1930s, I was determined to follow the direction of my teacher Mr. Wu Wenzao, who proposed the establishment of a school of Chinese sociology by introducing the methods of anthropology. Specifically, this meant applying Western functionalist methods of fieldwork to create a sociology that conformed to China's own developmental needs. This goal was clearly inspired by contemporary Western anthropology, and the methodology was to be positivist, itself an expression within academia

[1] The Revolution toppled the Qing dynasty and overthrew 2,000 years of imperial rule.

of very specific Western cultural features. According to this method, scientific theories must always be based on visible, concrete, objective reality.

A particular feature of positivism is its focus on the biological person so prominent in Western culture. According to this theory, culture is essentially "by man, for man." "By man" means culture is created by humans, the so-called human world. It is a tool at the service of man. This accurately describes the world in which we live today, where all our daily necessities have been transformed from the natural world by human effort. We all understand this and experience it firsthand.

In our modern life, our physical interactions with the natural world are now even filtered and altered by man-made devices. We wear glasses and now have telescopes and microscopes since the naked eye is not enough to see nature up close; our sense of hearing too is assisted by hearing aids and telephones which can help us distinguish and hear distant sounds. This kind of reality has accustomed us to thinking of the natural world as a life resource.

On the one hand, our life has broadened and become more complex; on the other, we consider nature merely something to be used, and our culture becomes just a tool created "for man." "Conquering nature" is thus seen as the goal of all human endeavor. As a result, man and nature have now become adversaries, since "everything is to be used" is a key concept in Western cultural thinking.

As our way of living becomes more modern, this dichotomous perspective becomes increasingly pronounced, leading to the conviction that the human world is the result of our successful transformation of the natural one; so now we have not only set these two worlds against each other, we have set biological man against nature as well. Here, the term "man" is also understood in the modern Western sense of "individual" because up until today, individualism remains an immovable cornerstone of Western culture. According to this perspective, individualism together with man-made culture has created a more advanced, modern lifestyle. So now not only is man against nature, but culture is too, which is probably one of the most distinctive features of Western culture's current development. Such a perspective is reflected in Western academic circles as well, primarily by the dominance of the natural sciences in those fields that focus on a knowledge of nature. The result has been the marginalization of the social sciences and humanities that study society and culture, though they too are a part of the natural world.

In summary, the Western cultural bias is to see man in opposition to nature, culture as man-made and serving man. Man becomes the subject and nature merely an object to be controlled by him. The role of man is exaggerated, to the extent that culture is seen as the result of man's exploiting nature for his own ends. According to such cultural values, a main human goal is the conquest of nature and a belief that this is possible; cultural development is motivated by utilitarian considerations; culture is merely a tool to attain human life goals; and since tools are judged by their usefulness, so too is culture.

Of course Darwin's very important theories of evolution, a major component of modern Western thought, affirm that mankind is a part of nature too, just one life form that evolved from lower life forms. However, this basic scientific understanding has been suppressed by human self-interest, and instead, the evolutionary principles

of natural selection are emphasized to show that culture is merely a tool to exploit nature. The resulting utilitarianism only intensifies the opposition between man and nature. The aim of science has become both to conquer nature and to exploit it. The study of the physical aspects of nature has practically taken over the whole of Western scientific inquiry; even the later human sciences have also focused primarily on the physical aspects of man. The science of human psychology has also placed its greatest emphasis on the human nervous system, the so-called behavioral sciences. All this goes to show how deeply the development of Western science has been constrained by its cultural values.

Recently, as part of my efforts to make up for what I have missed, I have been reviewing the history of Western sociology in the early twentieth century. In Professor R. Park's works, I note his grave concern that the European and American sociology of his day paid scant attention to the intangible aspects of human existence. Science is the study of objective phenomena in the natural world, and the influence of empiricism meant that investigation centered only on the visible and audible. However, since very important aspects of human life take place in the heart-and-mind, silent and invisible, sociology was seriously stymied at the time and unable to become a "real science."

I am speaking here about mainstream Western science. Of course, there were also many who were dissatisfied with this state of affairs, and my teachers all belonged to this group. For example, my professor at Tsinghua University, Professor Shirokogoroff, tried very hard to investigate the culture of man's spiritual life, yet was unable to find any appropriate term in traditional Western vocabulary to describe it, so he proposed the rather obtuse "psycho-mental," even using it in the title of his last major work. I suspect he coined this word because researchers of his generation were still reluctant to consider the intangible essence of culture as a topic for scientific research. On a personal level, when I first began to study anthropology, Professor Shirokogoroff laid out for me a three-step process: first, physical anthropology; second, linguistics; and third, the cultural anthropology of the day. At the time I did not realize that they represented the three levels of study of human beings, that is, to start from the biological attributes; then to move on to language, the tool of interpersonal communication and consensus-building to guide common action, or what I think Professor Park meant by scientific sociology; and finally to proceed to comparative research of the many different world cultures. These are all the insights of old age, and I bring them up here because I wish to make the point that even today, this neglect of spiritual aspects in culture theory is still not completely overcome. This oversight exposes the dichotomous relationship of "man versus nature" so fundamental in the Western worldview.

It must further be pointed out that here the "man" in the above expression is in fact the concept of egoistic "self" so highly rated in Western culture. This "self" is not the biological being, even less the social being, but is the "individual" who serves only himself. I understand this concept of "self" to be central to Western culture. Understanding the difference between Western and Chinese culture perhaps starts with understanding this core value. In traditional Chinese culture, the "self" must be "controlled" and "subdued" since only then can "ritual action" (*li*) be

restored, which is the necessary condition for a person to become a member of society, to become a social being. "Display self" and "control self" may well be one of the key differences between Western and Chinese culture.

I have already mentioned above that "by man, for man" in relation to the essence of culture is neither accurate nor complete, so I need to say a few more words about the "man" part of this expression. I have always been influenced by the concept in modern Western thought that man has evolved from lower life forms. Mr. Pan Guangdan, one of my teachers, translated Darwin's *The Descent of Man* into Chinese, and I accept the scientific conclusions it lays out. It is also necessary to point out that as the higher life form of man has evolved over the millennia, it has also acquired attributes unknown to other life forms and that the continued development of these attributes has created abilities that surpass other animals. Among them are cognitive functions resulting from a highly developed nervous system that receives external stimuli to form impressions that are then stored as memories, which can be combined into conceptual knowledge of the external world. What's more, this ability has further developed into the use of meaningful symbols and hence to speech and writing. Thanks to meaningful speech and commonly accepted symbols, information is passed between individuals, and human understanding and empathy are fostered.

This is the key to human relationships, making it possible to work together, take on different roles, reach common goals, and strive for common aspirations. Such is the process by which a "social entity" is formed, as Professor Park calls it. The terms "biological person" and "social being" can be used to distinguish between the biological person created by evolution and the social being nurtured within the groups formed by clusters of biological persons. There is no such thing as a biological person existing completely alone. And yet, within Western culture, this is precisely the kind of egoistic "self" that is given greatest prominence, thus setting up the opposition of man to nature. In fact, this fictitious "self" is a biological person who cannot survive on his own.

Just like all animals, the biological person lives for a finite period and must die in the end. The time between birth and death is his life span. Biological man lives in groups, and his existence is made possible thanks to common ways he follows and copies from others. This process transforms him into a social being, and only as such can he live out his natural life. It is through gradually becoming a social being throughout the course of his life span that each biological person is able to sustain his existence.

When we say "life" (*shengming*), we are usually referring to biological man, and when we say "living" (*shenghuo*), we usually mean social man. Living sustains life that extends from birth until death. However, "living" is a learned way of existence achieved by relying on genetically inherited physical qualities. All personal behavior, from infancy to final death, is learned from the group of similar people in which the person lives; everything is provided by this group. This is all included in what I call the human world and is the substance of culture. The moment an infant leaves the mother's body, it begins to live in and depend upon the human world created by those who came before; in other words, it starts to become a social being. The present

human world is where biological man is transformed into social man. It has existed since human kind first appeared and is a collective creation of accumulated lived experiences, learned and copied from each other, to become a common source of life and heritage. If we look carefully into the components of this human world, we note that it is made up of innumerable separate innovations created thanks to individuals' inborn qualities, as well as their accumulated experiences of interactions with the natural world. However, once these innovations are accepted by the group, the human world no longer belongs to any one individual anymore. This is what we mean by the social nature of culture. Culture is created by people, but this is only for the earliest "pieces," because it then continues within the group thanks to a general acceptance. A group of social beings extend their existence by learning from each other and by using the material and spiritual resources of this human world, its so-called hardware and software. The death of an individual does not mean the cultural "pieces" die with him or her. Biological persons cannot escape the inevitability of death, but the tools of living and the behaviors which form the components of culture do not disappear with biological death. Through successive differential modes of association and social replacement, as well as overlapping life spans, culture is able to transcend the deaths of biological individuals. The human world thus flourishes and decays according to historical laws of its own. Such is the historical nature of culture.

At the risk of repeating myself, allow me to say a bit more about both the social and historical nature of culture. I must emphasize that social man relies on the group to survive, while the group itself is made up of biological individuals who, by living together, form a society which in turn creates social man. At the individual level, the death of a biological person is also the death of a social being, so without the biological individual there is no vehicle for social man. However, from the perspective of the group, individual deaths occur at different times, and this constitutes the differential modes of association that provide for social replacement, as described in my work *Reproductive Systems*.[2] In this way, the culture created by biological persons (culture includes social organizations and systems) is handed down from one generation to the next. As long as the whole group does not die off at the same time, culture will continue to be passed along. Material objects and artifacts of a culture are not lost even though the users die. If subsequently the group does disappear, these material cultural remains can be reidentified and revived. That is why we say that culture has the ability to transcend time, and the life of a culture can continue and be renewed without the vehicle of man, either biological or social. This is the historical nature of culture and has led to the field of "archaeology."

Rethinking and understanding the social and historical nature of culture can help us adjust our own cultural values. I have already said above that I think the majority of people living in Western cultures are strongly influenced by egoistic individualist cultural values, which, over the last 200-odd years of history, have been crucial to the establishment of Western cultural dominance in the world. But now, I am concerned that a tipping point has been reached. I mean by this that the dichotomy

[2] In Chinese, *Shengyu zhidu* (《生育制度》), Beijing: Commercial Press, 1999.

between man and nature is now causing a backlash from nature, the most obvious being that pollution of the environment is making human life more difficult. Just to cite a recent example close to home, the recent aggravating dust storms in North China were the worst weather phenomena that I have experienced personally in my 90-odd years. This is just a small example of nature's resistance to our frenzied attempts to conquer it. The broad picture is that mankind has begun to realize what is happening and is proposing a green revolution; yet unfortunately, the latest international treaties on environmental protection have not received unanimous support from all countries.

September 11, 2001 was a huge shock to the whole world. I see it as a serious warning to the West. After watching the tragic scenes on TV, I thought to myself that the Western countries, and particularly the United States, would surely search for the causes of this event, reflect upon themselves, and ask if the West might have gone wrong somewhere. Of course, this was my personal reaction. However, my hope never materialized. The subsequent developments were extremely disappointing. I can understand the desire for revenge: "a tooth for a tooth" is the most primitive response of human beings, even of animals. However, everything then became a criminal investigation, and finding and catching the perpetrators became the main counter-policy. When this proved very difficult, the animosity was directed at the countries they were suspected to be hiding in, and an asymmetrical war was launched using advanced technology and weapons to bomb indiscriminately. This war waged in the justified name of antiterrorism has however brought death and destruction to many ordinary, innocent people. For me, this is a blatant example of using terrorist means to combat terrorism. Isn't this exactly what the ancient Chinese admonition warns against, of not "replacing one violence with another?" Of course, this is the private opinion of an aged, somewhat uninformed person. However, if we link the events of this period to the Western perspective of "man versus nature," we can conclude that Western values accord far too little importance to the intangible aspects of culture and that cultural relations are not dealt with in a rational way. This is something we should ponder carefully.

As I continue to reflect on culture, I would like to say a few more words about the cultural differences between East and West. I have stressed the Western concepts of man and nature because this is one crucial difference. Personally, I believe that Western culture's emphasis on man's use of nature to create the natural sciences that in turn promote technology is very different from traditional Chinese thought, which in contrast places most value on "harmony between man and nature" (*tian ren he yi*). I mentioned at the start that my education from childhood was in "foreign" schools and that I lack a classical traditional background. I never studied in a private academy, was never subjected to old-style discipline, and received no formation in the classics. However, outside the classroom, I was influenced by the research into traditional Chinese culture carried out by the previous generation of scholars, and I had heard of "harmony between man and nature," even though the concept did not penetrate my consciousness deeply. Only now, in my 90s, have I studied the works of Mr. Qian Mu, who came from my hometown of Wuxian in Wuxi. He was a historian and a strong proponent of "harmony between man and nature." The story

goes that shortly before he died, he told his wife that he had had sudden new insights and understanding of the concept, but he was unable to write them down in time to leave to us.

Recalling this has led me to further note the differences between Western and Chinese culture. The origin of the West's current acute pursuit of self-interest and emphasis on natural science may well stem from this worldview of "man versus nature." Pondering the relationship between "nature" and "man" as defined by Mr. Qian Mu, I have been led to reflect on the contrasts between the two cultures, and as a result, I too have felt a sudden deepening of my insights. The *Book of Changes* (*Yi jing*) has always been venerated as a classic of Chinese culture. It describes the state of "supreme ultimate" (*taiji*) in which the *yin* and the *yang* unite into one. What we call the universe today is *taiji*, based on two combined into one. "Harmony between man and nature" is just one way of describing this worldview. Chinese culture basically favors unity over division; the concept of "great systemic whole" (*da yi tong*) is also an expression of harmony between man and nature. We reject "man versus nature" and oppose the unbridled, unbalanced transformation of nature to serve the interests of man. Instead, we advocate adapting to nature, which is expressed by my teacher Mr. Pan Guangdan's concept of "social adaptation" (*wei yu*). This is a part of the "middle way" (*zhongyong*), where opposites balance one another, where one divides into two, and two combine into one, where the *yin* and the *yang* fuse to become *taiji*.

The traditions of our Chinese culture are based on different assumptions from those of Western culture. Yet in an economically globalized world full of cultural diversity, we must avoid clashes between civilizations that may destroy us all. This should be the warning of September 11. It is inevitable that civilizations will meet and interact, so to achieve sustainable development, we must heed the warnings of September 11 and the war in Afghanistan to avoid total self-destruction. It is because of these circumstances that I have been reflecting upon the cultures of China and the West, hoping that in spite of differences each will move toward living in peace with the other. I make this call at the centenary anniversary of my hometown university, while also expressing my conviction that our Chinese culture will contribute to history by finding ways to help resolve the contradictions of these troubled times. I have said a great deal but probably not very well; however, I hope you will forgive the inadequacies of old age.

Thank you.

May 2002

Chapter 13
Rethinking Cultural Values

13.1 Introduction

I am extremely happy to be here in Hong Kong to attend the opening session of the Fifth Conference on Modernization and Chinese Culture. This is the fifth time that sociologists and anthropologists from the Chinese Mainland, Hong Kong, and Taiwan have met in a regular scholarly exchange. The last conference in 1993 was held in my hometown of Suzhou. In my paper then I said I was "in the twilight of my life" yet here we are again, four short years later and all of us 4 years older. I myself am 87 now and should retire from such gatherings, but I just could not resist the chance to discuss and exchange views again with so many old friends. So, against the wishes of my family, I have made this trip. I hope you will understand these feelings and forgive me if I say anything that is unreasonable or inappropriate.

Many of you know that, over the last few years, I have several times said that I have been looking back and reflecting on the 60-odd years of my academic career. I have sought to do "a summing up" of all the things I have written. Although I had not planned to talk about my life at previous meetings, I nevertheless used them as occasions to look back and reflect.

The topic of this forum is "Applied Social Sciences and China's Modernization." This implies a certain process, that is, the process by which we, researchers into man and society, apply the conclusions of our work to real life in order to obtain concrete results. However, as someone who has trodden this path for over six decades, I am compelled to consider a more complex issue. As many of you know, I was awarded the Malinowski Award from the Society for Applied Anthropology in 1981, no doubt because over my lifetime I have written a great many papers which early on were placed in the category of "applied research." I have also pointed out that my research is part of a Chinese applied anthropology whose goal is to

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understand China and promote its progress.[1] Most of you are also aware that, over the past 60 years, there have been different assessments both at home and abroad, of the "applied value" of my work, and of my views on Chinese modernization.

Last September, during a gathering with friends in Wujiang, an acquaintance from London mentioned the disagreement between my former university classmate Professor Edmund Leach and myself over the value of anthropology.[2] Leach and I were both students of Malinowski; however, Leach insists that anthropology is purely an intellectual exercise, while I believe that it must start from reality and must genuinely participate in the life of those it studies and that it must aspire to practical applications, or else it will lose any intrinsic value.

Edmund Leach has already passed away, and I cannot discuss things face-to-face with him anymore, so I can only "talk to myself" now. In my speech "The Study of Man in China" at the International Symposium on The Study of East Asian Societies in 1990, I not only responded from a theoretical perspective to his comments on Chinese anthropologists, I also conceded the influence of traditional Chinese intellectual thinking on my own concept of "applied research," as well as the unconscious effects of the Confucian value of "study in order to use."[3] However, I am sure that Leach was well aware when he was alive that our disagreement does not stem entirely from dissimilar national academic traditions but also from a different understanding of social science systems, and even going a bit further, to a different view of Max Weber's ideas on the role of values in the social sciences.

Weber, one of the fathers of social science, once used the term "valueless sociology" to describe them and the term "vocation" to describe its scholars' aims and position in academia. By "valueless" he meant that researchers must not bring with them their personal and society's values into their observations of social reality nor intervene in objective social existence. A deconstruction of its meaning is "sociology without value judgments." "Vocation" is a difficult term to translate into Chinese, and I still have not found a good word for it. It implies both a kind of talent and an inspired wisdom that transcends social reality; maybe the expression *tianzhi* is the best approximation. Leach's views are pretty much an extension into anthropology of Weber's theories. Our disagreement is neither isolated nor random, but relates to a common issue in the social sciences, that is, Leach questions the values guiding my academic practice, and I often wonder whether "valueless sociology" is actually possible at all.

So where is the problem? I don't intend here to repeat the differences between academic traditions or to trace their origins; instead, I will just describe some ordinary aspects of a scholar's work. Take myself, for instance. After writing a piece and sending it off to the publishers, I never used to think this was anything more than a personal action nor considered what the effects on others might be. Whether these

[1] "The Study of Man in China" (in Chinese, *Ren de yanjiu zai zhongguo* 《人的研究在中国》), *Works of Fei Xiaotong* (*Fei Xiaotong wenji* 《费孝通文集》), vol. 12, pp. 14, 15, Beijing: Qunyan Press, 1999.

[2] *Ibid*.

[3] *Ibid*.

were good or bad was not really my concern. Earlier this year at Peking University's advanced seminar, I described how, in my childhood, I used to watch my grandmother collect all papers with writing on them and burn them in a stove. She used to admonish me to "cherish paper with the written word." When I grew a bit older, I even used to laugh at her for being so superstitious. However, when I reached the same age she was then, I truly began to understand why she had said this, because once things are written down, they can bring good fortune or disaster to people and so should never be taken lightly. Now that I realize what she meant by her strictures and actions, I feel quite chastened, because in my lifetime, I have been altogether too casual with the written word. I have written at will, published in newspapers and journals, even collected articles into books, and seen them distributed at home and abroad, all without giving it too much thought. If I have written anything harmful, then I have truly sown trouble. That's why, with my grandmother's admonitions ringing in my ears, I have decided to go back and look over everything I have put down on paper. Of course, I don't intend to burn it all, as Tolstoy did, since what is already out there cannot be destroyed by fire. However, this process has also shown me that my copious writings are not purely personal, but also a reflection of the way we Chinese intellectuals thought and felt back then. History will decide whether my work has been for good or bad; I neither need to nor can make that judgment.

I don't know if Leach, in his old age, had the same issues, but I believe he would understand what my grandmother meant; in other words, he would understand that there is no academic work that does not have some kind of social effect. The only difference is whether the effect is good or bad, large or small, or how many people it reaches, so I believe that "valueless sociology" is actually not realistic. Now, looking back over 60 years of academic work, I strongly feel I must waste some more paper in a self-critique. I used to bury myself in what I was doing; only now am I asking myself these questions on the relationship between academic and social values. Recently, I thought of a term "cultural self-awareness."[4] Today, when discussing the theme of "Applied Social Sciences and China's Modernization," I would like to flesh it out with some academic content, because otherwise it sounds a bit like a slogan. For me, the expression represents my rethinking of the issue of cultural values.

13.2 Review of My Academic Thinking

My academic career began in 1936 with my study of Jiangcun. Some 60 years have gone by, a full cycle according to the ancient calendar. So let me begin with my account of *Peasant Life in China—A Field Study of Country Life in the Yangtze Valley.*[5] I have said many times that this work was like a casually planted willow

[4] See "Reflections, Dialogues, and Cultural Self-Awareness" (*Fansi, duihua, wenhua zijue*), 1997.

[5] Fei Xiaotong, *Peasant Life in China—A Field Study of Country Life in the Yangtze Valley.* London: Routledge, 1939. This was translated by Dai Kejing into Chinese in the 1980s and has been published under the title *Jiangcun jingji* (《江村经济》) in some 20 prints so far.

sapling. However, Professor Malinowski in his preface said that it was "a landmark in the development of anthropological field-work and theory." At the time, I had not anticipated such an evaluation nor did I fully understand it. In other words, when I was doing my field study in Jiangcun Village, I had no conscious intention of advancing the field of anthropology. After all, at the time I was a young man just starting out, with neither vision nor ambition, and had not even thought of writing a book about my study. My elder sister had kindly arranged for me to go to Jiangcun to recover my health. The photographs in the book show me using a cane and still looking very wan and weak.[6] The rural silk cooperative where I stayed made a big impression on me and inspired me to collect data about this "industry going to the countryside," because I wished to leave some record behind.

Unexpectedly, this casually planted sapling grew tall, thanks to fertile soil and gentle rain. As my dissertation, it was published upon completion with a preface by Professor Malinowski, which I only read cursorily in the proofs sent to me by the publishing house just before I left London to return to China. To be quite frank, I had only a vague impression of it, because at the time my attention was focused on the War Against Japanese Aggression (1937–1945) that was raging at home. I recall it was in one of the ports of India where we stopped that we found out that Wuhan and Guangzhou had fallen to the Japanese. My companions and I were busy with formalities to get a visa to disembark in Vietnam and transit back to China. The first time I actually saw a copy of the English edition of *Peasant Life in China* was in 1948, in the study of Shengyin Courtyard at Tsinghua University, over a decade after it first came out.

I disembarked in Saigon and returned to China via Hanoi. After arriving in Kunming in Yunnan province, I followed Professor Malinowski's advice and continued my research into rural life in the villages around Dianchi Lake. After victory over Japan in 1945, the civil war began and I threw myself into the movement for democracy. During this period, my academic publication was limited to the English edition of *Three Villages in Yunnan*, for which I adopted the title *Earthbound China,*[7] as suggested by Professor Malinowski over a meal together. The formal Chinese edition only appeared in 1990.[8] My understanding of *Peasant Life in China* has deepened over time. I now think that Professor Malinowski's preface was intended not so much as a comment on my book, as to express his own long-considered concerns.

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[6] In 1935, Fei Xiaotong graduated from the Graduate School of Tsinghua University and was awarded a scholarship for study abroad. Professor Shirokogorov suggested that he go to the minority regions for a year of fieldwork before leaving, so Fei and his wife proceeded to the Dayao Mountains in Guangxi province. That winter, they lost their way in the mountains, Fei's wife died, and he was badly injured.

[7] English translation prepared by Fei in the United States in 1943–1944 in collaboration with others. University of Chicago Press, 1945, and also London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1949.

[8] Tianjin: People's Publishing of Tianjin, 1990.

At the time, he was gravely affected by the serious situation of World War II, which is why he wrote "Our modern civilization is perhaps now facing its final destruction." He described me as a "young Chinese patriot" and expressed envy that I should have this opportunity to conduct research among my own people and to serve mankind through the results. He even confessed that "most of us forward-looking anthropologists have felt impatient with our own work for its remoteness, exoticism and irrelevancy." He criticized himself: "Anthropology, to me at least, was a romantic escape from our over-standardized culture." As I read these words today, I think they express his anger at the way in which scholars had lost their homeland at the hands of colonial and imperialist powers. However, he then confidently says:

> …[T]he progress of anthropology towards a really effective analytic science of human society, of human conduct, and of human nature, cannot be staved off. To achieve this, however, the science of man has first and foremost to move from so-called savagery into the study of more advanced cultures of the numerically, economically, and politically important peoples of the world.[9]

I repeat these words here because I wish to point out that Professor Malinowski wanted to drag modern anthropologists out of their stuffy studies into the fresh air of "the field." Next, he clearly says that anthropological research should then leave behind the study of savagery in order to study the communities of advanced cultures. In the development of anthropology, he contributed a great deal to this first step of leaving the "study for the field," but was unable in his lifetime to realize the second step from "savagery" to "advanced." He hoped the next generation of anthropologists would complete this task. The gap was difficult to cross, and that is what I think Professor Malinowski was very concerned about.

I ask myself how it was that I seemingly effortlessly succeeded in this. Professor Malinowski answers this for me in his preface when he says at the end:

> A dispassionate, detached, and dignified attitude characterizes all the Author's observations. That a Chinese must today have bitter feelings against Western civilization and the political rule of Western nations, is understandable. Yet no trace of this will be found in the present book. In fact, throughout my personal acquaintance with Dr. Fei and some of his colleagues, I had to admire the absence of national prejudice and national hatred—a moral attitude from which we Europeans could learn a great deal.

His answer basically describes one cultural difference between China and Europe, that is, a fundamental difference in moral attitude. Professor Malinowski believed that Chinese do not have the kind of ethnic biases and animosities that Europeans have. This generalization has yet to be proved. However, when I examine myself, I often feel that though traditional Chinese culture does have certain biases toward other ethnic groups, they differ from those of the Europeans and Americans. In my talks to the advanced seminar, I mention that in European and American anthropology, the difference between "savagery" and "advanced" represented the difference between "being human" or not and that even as late as the 1930s, there

[9] Malinowski, "Preface" to *Peasant Life in China* by Fei Xiaotong, London: Routledge, 1939, pp. xxi–xxii.

were still people who doubted whether indigenous peoples had the kind of rational cognitive ability that Western white people believed was essential to "being human." Quite a few Western anthropologists at the time denied that "savages" possessed the powers of logical thought. In Malinowski's day, he was compelled to debate the issue by insisting that shamanism was not the product of a lack of logical thinking.

Our traditional culture also distinguishes between the *yi* ("barbarians") and the *xia* (Chinese), but Confucius always advocated "there being instruction, there will be no distinction of classes (*you jiao wu lei).*" Realizing that he could not persuade the people of the Central Plains to follow his teachings, Confucius dreamed of sailing away across the sea, and even said he would be willing to live among the "nine tribes of *yi*," which shows that he believed culture was really the only difference between them and the *xia* and that with instruction, they would assimilate. That is, the basic essential of "being human" was the same, and there was nothing that could not be changed.

Through my actions and ways of thinking, Professor Malinowski noticed the difference in this moral attitude between us Chinese and the Europeans and Americans. Perhaps, it was this that allowed me to cross the gap between "savage" and "advanced" in my anthropological studies, so I can say it was my cultural background that made it all possible.

I must also point out that, as a Chinese scholar, I was most likely able to transcend cultural biases because of the position of my country in the world cultural configuration. For the last few centuries, Western culture has been on the rise, and its influence and economic power have spread, giving it a "hegemonic" position in the world. From its high vantage point, its view of itself and others probably prevented it from "modestly learning" from anyone else. This attitude prevailed until 30 years after Professor Malinowski's death, when Western scholars gradually came to recognize the issue.

In 1978, Professor Edward Said published *Orientalism*, in which he reminds us:

> The modern Orientalist was, in his view, a hero rescuing the Orient from the obscurity, alienation and strangeness which he himself had properly distinguished. His research reconstructed the Orient's lost languages, mores, even mentalities, as Champollion reconstructed Egyptian hieroglyphics out of the Rosetta Stone. The specific Orientalist techniques–lexicography, grammar, translation, cultural decoding–restored, fleshed out, reasserted the values both of an ancient, classical Orient and of the traditional disciplines of philology, history, rhetoric, and doctrinal polemic. But in the process, the Orient and Orientalist disciplines changed dialectically, for they could not survive in their original form. The Orient, even in the "classic" form which the Orientalist studied, was modernized, restored to the present; the traditional disciplines too were brought into contemporary culture. Yet both bore the traces of power–power to have resurrected, indeed created, the Orient, power that dwelt in the new, scientifically advanced techniques of philology and of anthropological generalization. In short, having transported the Orient into modernity, the Orientalist could celebrate his method, and his position, as that of a secular creator, a man who made new worlds as God had once made the old.[10]

[10] Edward Said, *Orientalism,* Vintage Books Edition, New York: Random House, 1979, p. 121.

Said also points out that, since the nineteenth century, Orientalism experienced two major "advances." The first began in the middle of the nineteenth century and ended with World War I. During this period, France and Great Britain acquired vast colonies, and studying them became a necessity for governing them. At the same time, these colonies also provided opportunities for Orientalists to collect and study materials from them, many provided directly by philologists, historians, anthropologists, and archeologists on the ground, thus opening up a "golden age" of Orientalism in Paris and at Oxford University. The second major "advance" occurred during and after World War II. Huge changes occurred in the world, many Oriental colonies were liberated, and Western supremacy shifted from Britain and France to the ascending United States. The former dominant powers naturally attempted to retain their traditional position, and Oriental studies continued to be seen as a "protected national treasure." However, the United States, as the new hegemonic power, supported research of larger strategic regions, so Oriental studies expanded to include the entire Pacific Rim and Asia. Most of these regional studies were developed under the label of "cross-cultural understanding," but they also undeniably contributed hugely to maintaining the global dominance of the United States. Orientalism inevitably changed a great deal in these two periods; however, the deeper structures of its discourse, expression, and research never departed from tradition.

The ideas put forth in *Orientalism* are valid not only for Western Oriental studies but also for the modern social sciences. In current Western social sciences, there exists a widely held concept of "duality" that draws a line dividing the world into two distinct parts, East and West. And the West is the center, while Asia is the defeated, distant "alien land." The concept also posits that Asia represents potential danger, that its mysterious cultures can neither be explained nor controlled by Western science, and that it could in the future pose a challenge to the West. In Orientalist writings, this dualism is seen as the opposites complementary to each other.

Said points out that Orientalism is closely linked to the gradual rise of Western capitalism starting in the sixteenth century. In fact, the East-west relationship created by world capitalism is presented in social sciences and economics in terms of "tradition" and "modernity." In the research in both these disciplines, the East is portrayed as traditional and ancient and the West as modern and new. During the nineteenth century, this "legitimized" the belief that the East was the "white man's burden," where Eastern traditions were viewed as burdens for the West, heretical practices which must be changed through education. The many theories of "modernization" originating in the West have direct, deep roots in this Orientalist perspective.

In all my experiences of cultural interactions, I have always belonged to the underdog culture, and so it has been relatively easy for me to avoid the cultural biases of the dominant one. In many of my writings, I have been able to examine and comment widely on Western views; I have also been able to highlight the active role played by "grassroots cultures" and "minor traditions" within Chinese civilization itself. This cultural perspective for assessing others is completely different from

the Western one that claims that the cultures of weaker, smaller nations are incompatible with the "advanced" ones. This is also the basic reason why I do not exclude outside cultures and have refused to reproduce the "savage" and "advanced" dichotomy.

I must point out here that advocating broad cultural inclusiveness is not out of nostalgia for the past or conservatism nor is it to achieve "revitalization" as described by Anthony Wallace.[11] When a smaller, weaker culture is under heavy pressure from a controlling outside one, it is understandable that it has a temporary desire to restore the old. However, if this develops into rejection of the outside culture in favor of a new kind of nationalist-centric attitude in opposition to the Western-centric one, then there is the risk of ignoring the harsh reality of "survival of the fittest" in cultural relations. I have recently been pondering a very bothersome issue. At the recent advanced seminar held in Peking University, we discussed the crisis of ethnic survival, and someone raised the dichotomy of either "preserving culture" or "preserving people." This is highly relevant in China, especially for those minority ethnic groups with small populations, but as I see it, it has general broader implications for modern and postindustrial mankind as a whole. "Preserving culture" or "preserving people" really should not be contradictory, since people cannot be separated from their culture, and my teacher always argued that culture exists as a tool to serve specific human needs. However, with the development of a Western-centric world system, non-Western cultures are indeed facing a crisis: that is, can their cultural forms continue to fulfill their present needs when they are under such strong pressures from outside? In the social sciences, the concept of "modernization" was proposed probably to answer precisely this question that from the start was actually more a matter of cultural values.

The many different theories on modernization initiated by the West are hard to summarize; however, they all basically follow the same line of reasoning. Emile Durkheim, the early French sociologist, believed there were two kinds of society in the world: one was "traditional," the other "modern." The former was characterized by stable, internal group institutions and the latter by multiple social divisions of labor. "Modernization" occurred when the former evolved into the latter. The German Max Weber argued that "modernity" meant industrialization and rational bureaucracy, together leading to the rationalization of society, which was the effective use of capital to reduce inputs and increase outputs, defeat the competition, and satisfy consumer needs. These processes occurred, thanks to the "the spirit of capitalism."[12] Durkheim and Weber differ radically in many ways, but they both insist on one thing—that "modernity" means "Westernization" and that "the East" will move toward a "Western" social model. From Said's perspective, all these theories of "modernization" are built upon linear, phased evolutionism. The assumption that "modern society" ("Western society") will inevitably be the future for "tradi-

[11] Anthony Wallace, "Revitalization Movements," *American Anthropologist*, vol. 58, 1956, pp. 264–281.

[12] Max Weber, *Protestant Ethics and the Spirit of Capitalism*, New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1958.

tional society" ("Oriental society") is a legacy from the past and only serves to demonstrate the influence of former Orientalist bias on Western academia. This may be so and yet if Eastern societies refuse to accept the cultural transformations required by modernization, how will their peoples survive in this world of "survival of the fittest"?

This is not a new question. In my own lifetime, we in China have argued over these issues of how to "use" Western culture and extensively debated "China versus the West." Even today, academia continues to be influenced by debates at home and abroad over the relationship between modernization and Confucian culture, as well as minor cultures and traditions. Many people want to build a society that will both differ from the past and be compatible with Western society, which is why modernity and its attributes are much sought after in Eastern societies. The result is that theories of modernization loaded with "Orientalist" biases often dominate non-Western political thinking, and the Western "alien culture" actually becomes the idealized future for Eastern cultural development. In fact, this is falling into the trap of Euro-American-centric cultural hegemony. But how to "cure" this crisis in cultural identity? How to avoid this pitfall, and which academic theories can be applied?

13.3 Cross-Cultural Seminar

My discussion today is not to propose answers to these "exam questions," but I believe there is an intrinsic value in raising them, reflecting on them, and reviewing the theories. My talk today, as well as several of my recent articles, can all be considered part of this effort in which I revisit my previous writings and record my latest insights. I first began writing these articles in 1993, at the forum on sociology and anthropology held in Suzhou and attended by scholars from the Chinese Mainland, Taiwan, and Hong Kong. I presented a paper there titled "The Individual, the Group, and Society" which laid out my latest ideas after rereading my book *Reproductive Systems*. I have written a number of other articles on the same subject that have all been published in a new collection entitled *Reviewing My Academic Writings.*[13]

This kind of review is not my invention, but is an extension of what I learned from Professor Malinowski's seminars at the London School of Economics. A seminar means scholars enter into a dialogue. Recently, we held an advanced seminar on sociocultural anthropology at Peking University, to encourage academic advisors and students to discuss issues more broadly in the form of a dialogue, instead of merely a one-way transmission of information. My own recent reflective writings are actually a conversation with myself, a discussion with myself about my previous academic achievements that then lead to a rethinking of them. More open and candid exchanges can create a new kind of academic atmosphere.

[13] Fei Xiaotong, *Reviewing My Academic Writings* (in Chinese, *Xueshu zishu yu fansi* 《学术自述与反思》), Beijing: Joint Publishing House, 1996.

If this applies to academia, then it certainly applies to cultures as well. Even as I speak, we are only less than 3 years away from the twenty-first century. A number of Western scholars have already begun consciously reviewing their past, recognizing the true nature of their ideas, and identifying the goal and meaning of existence. This is the "cultural self-awareness" that I have been reflecting upon recently. The fact that the Western humanities and social sciences have begun this process indicates an awareness of the present cultural crisis. Many scholars have been agonizing over the issues and some are already trying to find new paths. Some anthropologists have proposed that, since research into "alien cultures" (actually non-Western or Eastern cultures) cannot be totally objective, this kind of investigation should become a tool for consciously "critiquing one's own culture" and that through trying to understand non-Western societies, the weaknesses of Western civilization can be revealed.[14] Beginning in the 1960s and 1970s, world systems scholars have proposed new ideas in the debate on theories of modernization. They point out that the lack of development in the "East" is not because these societies have low "industrialization" or insufficient "Westernization" but because contemporary colonial expansion of the West had bred "dependence and subordination." This is a response to the old "West-as-center" model and definitely reflects a different way of thinking about world cultural trends.

So it seems that cultural self-awareness is now a common desire of many around the world, not merely the subjective whim of any one individual. It is natural that concerned anthropologists today are particularly sensitive to the challenges facing their field and acutely aware of the urgency of the situation. That's why in spite of my advanced age, I still advocate cultural self-awareness and call upon everyone to reexamine and reflect upon our own Chinese society and culture, and in a positivist, factual way come to a fuller understanding of our long history and civilization.

By cultural self-awareness, I mean that those living within a specific culture come to "know themselves" and understand their history, how it evolved, its distinctive features, and future trends. In this, there is no implication of "cultural regression," or "returning to the past," nor does it mean "total Westernization" or "becoming like the other." Cultural self-awareness allows more deliberateness and initiative during cultural transformations, to make the cultural choices and adjustments to new environments and times. Achieving it is hard work, since it requires both knowing one's own culture and understanding all the other cultures one encounters. However, it will then be possible to position oneself within the pluralistic world that is forming, to make the conscious adjustments and learn from each other, so as to build a commonly acceptable order and system of rules that will allow all cultures to coexist in peace and work together for development.

At my 80th birthday party 7 years ago, I was in Japan with some old friends and, looking to the future of anthropology, proposed that "each appreciates its best, appreciates the best of others, all appreciate the best together to build greater har-

[14] George Marcus and Michael Fischer, *Anthropology as Cultural Critique*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986.

mony for all."[15] "Each appreciates its best" means that people in different cultures must first appreciate their own traditions. This is essential for groups living in dispersed and isolated environments. "Appreciate the best in others" means understanding the merits and aesthetics of other cultures; it is a reciprocal attitude essential for different peoples when they meet and attempt to coexist. "Appreciate the best together to build greater harmony of all" means that different groups must find commonly acceptable cultural values that will allow all cultural forms to coexist peacefully. Such a dynamic concept of cultural values is an attempt to create a cross-cultural "seminar" for civilizations to engage and thus learn from each other.

The history of mankind is one of scattered, isolated groups coalescing into unified communities. I have used the Warring States Period in Chinese history (475–221 BC) to describe the twentieth century.[16] There have been two world wars in this period, and major powers have jockeyed for dominance for over 100 years. After World War II, the colonial peoples achieved independence one after the other, creating a new economic and political diversity. However, the development of transport and communications is the momentum pushing toward integration. This configuration has similarities to the Warring States in that it is shifting from fragmentation to integration. The two world wars actually presaged the birth of "one world."[17] Today, there are increasingly frequent contacts between states, peoples, races, and religions, so that the previously separate cultures are moving toward a "global village." Sociologists call this "globalization," and I too believe that this is the future of the world.

At the same time, although mankind has the good intentions and aspirations to achieve a consensus on interests and values through increased communication, greater tolerance, and mutual learning, the previous social and cultural barriers based on power relations have not been eliminated, and the realities of the nation state make this integrated "cultural arena" an unrealized ideal.

Global integration may indeed be the way of the future, but without methods to achieve it, or to resolve the conflicts arising in the process, it will not be easy to reach. It now appears that when cultures meet, cultural values are the hardest things to integrate. That is why I specifically propose "appreciate the best together," that is, a path to finding a consensus on cultural values. And that is why I have here, at this forum, once more raised the issue of rethinking these values.

Since social anthropology studies the world of culture, it is natural for cultural values to be its focus. The varying concepts of "modernization" mentioned above are actually attempts to map out how global integration can take place when so many diverse cultural values exist. Some of these, as I described, propose that a dominant culture replace all those with different values, sometimes by force and

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[15] "The Study of Man in China" (in Chinese, *Ren de yanjiu zai zhongguo* 《人的研究在中国》), *Works of Fei Xiaotong* (*Fei Xiaotong wenji* 《费孝通文集》), vol. 12, pp. 14, 15, Beijing: Qunyan Press, 1999.

[16] Fei Xiaotong, *Sociology is Maturing* (in Chinese, *Shehuixue zai chengzhang* 《社会学在成长》), Tianjin: Tianjin People's Press, 1990.

[17] "The Study of Man in China," in *Works of Fei Xiaotong*, vol. 12, 1999.

sometimes voluntarily. Hidden behind the project of "modernization," then, is the Western-centric attempt to use Euro-American values to replace all others. I believe this does not fit with my proposal of "appreciate the best together." In the search for paths to global integration, we anthropologists should attempt to find a consensus through debate and dialogue, because factual reexamination of cultural values will not only advance the field of social anthropology itself but will also be a contribution to mankind's future.

My understanding of British functionalist social anthropology and American cultural anthropology of historicism is that both concede all national cultures have a rational basis. Thus, the first necessity is for "each to appreciate its best." After that, to understand the cultural values of others will require above all tolerance and a respect for the differences. Through cooperation and exchange of ideas, identification of similar cultural values will gradually emerge. In this process, there will indeed be a period in which different values coexist but in an atmosphere of tolerance and inclusiveness. I, for one, believe this can happen, since it is in the interests of all to live in peace and cooperation.

I entered the field of anthropology because I was inspired by just such cross-cultural values. Professor Edmund Leach is right when he says my anthropology began with learning about China's indigenous culture. However, my focus on my own culture is not to limit myself to it alone, but rather through understanding it better, to find ways for different cultural forms to coexist peacefully. That's why my writings from all periods, on the one hand, reflect a respect both for my native culture and for other traditions and, on the other, are an attempt to show that it is possible for cultures to communicate with and understand each other. It is probably necessary to emphasize that in the process of globalization, different national cultures can exist together at the same time while they strive for "greater harmony for all."

Thinking about it all now, this truly is an exploration of how alien and indigenous cultures can come together. Leach believed that the social anthropologist should study "exotic cultures," because only then would he achieve true objectivity and avoid social bias.[18] Regarding Chinese anthropologists, Leach believed that, aside from the value of their functionalist approach, they were unable to provide any persuasive anthropological explanations because they could not escape the culture they had been raised in and were accustomed to. I wish here to make the following two counterarguments. First, no matter how hard the anthropologist attempts to be an aloof observer of another culture, he is first and foremost a member of his own culture and is influenced by its values learned from childhood. In his writings, he will unavoidably describe how he understands the "alien culture" in juxtaposition to his own, in which case his observations are as lacking in true objectivity as those of the native anthropologist. Second, the indigenous anthropologist's work is never carried out within a single frame of reference alone. Take my own research, for example, which uses two "alien cultures" as reference points, namely, my personal experience at home and abroad with other ethnicities and also my knowledge of other

[18] Edmund Leach, *Social Anthropology,* pp. 122–148, London: Oxford University Press, 1983.

countries and peoples learned from my studies in social anthropology and other social sciences.

Looking back now, Leach's ideas were an example of conservative thinking, even by Western standards. Since the 1970s, many works by indigenous anthropologists have already been published in the West, and they all point out the weakness of Western research into non-Western societies, that is, excessive belief in their powers of analysis leads Western anthropologists to impose their own cultural concepts on the non-Western, foreign culture. This problem stems from both a lack of understanding of the foreign society and its anthropological significance and also from their cultural distance from "the other" society. Specifically, their own social position and the gap between themselves and the objects of study can cause misunderstanding of the other culture. Native scholars, on the other hand, with their insights into their own society and culture have less cultural distance and can avoid misunderstandings, since they live within the society and have personal experience of it.

In anthropology, "participant observation" is a term frequently used in conjunction with "alien culture." Traditional anthropology advocates that the scholar must not only study an alien culture while avoiding social bias from his own but also that he must participate in the life of his subjects so as to understand them more deeply. Using my own words, studying a foreign culture allows the anthropologist to "get out," while participant observation allows him to "get in." Those who believe investigating alien cultures is our main task are afraid that the indigenous researcher is "unable to get out" of his own culture, unable to put aside his own social position and biases to make "objective observations and judgments." However, on the other hand, it can also often be hard for an outside researcher to "get into" a foreign culture to carry out true participant observation, precisely because of being hampered by his/her own cultural biases. This is particularly the case for those foreign scholars who studied Chinese society. Freedman and Skinner[19] were outstanding China scholars and anthropologists and were recognized in the West as "China hands," and yet Westerners themselves often critiqued their conclusions for "seeing China only through the eyes of foreigners." For native Chinese anthropologists studying our own society, the problem is the reverse: difficulty in "getting out" of our own social role and habitual ways of thinking, so as to achieve an objective understanding. The indigenous scholar must try to put some distance between himself and his society, and the way to do this is through a deeper understanding of general theories and methods of anthropology, as well as through knowledge of the research of foreign China scholars. This can allow us a certain "defamiliarization" with our own society and culture.

However, my reflections on participant observation are not limited only to "getting out." Leach and other Western anthropologists like him believe that the goal of participating in an exotic culture is to achieve a kind of personal cultivation, which allows one to transcend one's own society so as to understand human life objec-

[19] Maurice Freedman authored *The Study of Chinese Society: Essays* edited by George William Skinner and published by Stanford University Press in 1979.

tively. In contrast, my research emphasizes that fieldwork and theory must be applied to social production, and I also advocate that research be fed back into the indigenous culture to advance and develop it.

I reiterate this importance of "participation," but not to "popularize" a research model rooted in cultural isolation. Currently, much of Western and Chinese anthropological thinking revolves around criticism of Western colonialism and cultural hegemony. For Third World anthropologists, it is indeed important to criticize the dominance of Western culture; however, there is also the danger of going from one cultural bias to another. How can scholars overcome the biases of their own social identity and power relations? One important way is to compare and reexamine different cultures and to evaluate different academic values. As we try to free ourselves from the controlling influences of Western culture, we must also transcend those set by our own society. I have emphasized connecting researchers with their subjects, that is, anthropologists must not only know "others" but also know "themselves." That is also why, as a person belonging to a "major tradition," I have for so long been enthusiastic about understanding the "minor traditions" within our own national society.

Everyone lives with some kind of hope for the future. Our actions and feelings today are driven by our dreams and expectations for tomorrow. Today, this theme of "Applied Social Sciences and China's Modernization" is surely to remind us all to join in the "modernization" process, to reflect upon our theories, and to ask where our hopes lie. Max Weber, one of the founders of modernization theory, considered cultural transformation a precondition for modernity and argued that the European "Protestant ethic" was best suited to achieving this. I do not deny that Weber was an erudite scholar who was also skillful at comparing cultures. His theories on modernization actually grew out of his observations and comparisons of religious cultures, and his research methodology is very similar to the cross-cultural research I have talked about today. What amazes me is that this highly respected German scholar subconsciously denied the right of other cultural forms to exist in a modern world that he was unable to reflect on his own cultural values and gain tolerance through cross-cultural understanding. It is not surprising then that as he grew older, he gradually became a bitter pessimist.

If we all agree that modernization is the start of a new system of human relations in the world, then we can probably agree that it should also be a process of achieving cultural self-awareness in the sense that all people (including academics) should, through their encounters, come to know themselves and "others," to create a more inclusive culture of peaceful coexistence. Understanding modernity from this perspective means we must thoroughly reexamine the "battle for supremacy of the Warring States" of the twentieth century, even as we stand on the cusp of a new one. Such a perspective will also prevent "modernization" from continuing to be a pretext for peoples, cultures, races, and nations to fight over differing interests. It will also help us to create a rational atmosphere in which all cultural values are accepted, so that cultural divisions that threaten mankind's very existence can be overcome. People assess the so-called "use" of social science in various ways. This is why, on the eve of the new century, I see the necessity for a new kind of project: a rethinking

of the meaning of cultural values. If we call this rethinking "cultural self-awareness," then I believe its "use" will be far wider than anything we have ever done in the "applied sciences." I hope that after listening to me today, you too will recognize the importance of rethinking cultural values and realize that they are the basis for a brighter future for mankind.

March 20, 1997

Chapter 14
Thoughts on the Advance of Industrial Civilization

Fei Xiaotong: Have you finished reading the book I gave you, *The Social Problems of an Industrial Civilization*? Any comments?

Fang Lili: This book was written by the American sociologist Elton Mayo and published in 1945 by the Graduate School of Business Administration of Harvard University. You yourself translated it into Chinese in the 1960s. The work describes many problems encountered in Western industrial civilization of that era. Though written over half a century ago, it is highly relevant to us today, because China's industrial revolution began just about half a century later than in the West, so many of the circumstances it describes are very similar to what we are experiencing today. I found it extremely thought provoking.

Fei: Mayo belonged to the generation before me. He was born in 1880, 30 years before myself, exactly a generation earlier. The issues he described are what we are presently encountering today. Now this is all very interesting and that's why I wish to discuss the book with you here. Please continue.

Fang: I think he discusses two main issues, one is different types of society, and the other is the growing complexity of modern technological civilization. Under the first issue he divides human society into two main types. First is agrarian society. This is a relatively stable, firmly established, and unchanging order. From the moment a person becomes conscious of his surroundings, he knows he will live according to his parents' upbringing and with companions who will not only grow up with him but will most likely be his neighbors and work with him in adulthood. His circle of friends will be pretty set and not change much. He knows he will most likely live the same way as his parents, and they will be his reference point for the future; he will spend his whole life in familiar surroundings with familiar people.

The second type is industrial society. This is a fast-developing, changing, and adaptive society. No one lives like their parents or makes the same choices because they face problems their parents never encountered before. No one lives or works in

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X. Fei, *Globalization and Cultural Self-Awareness*, China Academic Library,
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the same place or in the same job all their life; friends and partners often change; the future is uncertain and without reference points. There is high mobility, instability, and a sense of insecurity. In such a fast-changing society, culture is frequently unable to keep up with the rapid development of science and technology. People are able to tackle technical problems but have difficulty in their interpersonal relations and cooperating with others. This occurs between ethnic groups as well as between countries. In other words, there is an imbalance between scientific and technical development on the one hand and cultural and social values on the other.

The second main issue is the growing complexity of modern technological civilization, especially in relatively advanced socio-industrial countries, and the need for matching sophisticated organization. This organization cannot be restricted only to the physical aspects of complex situations but must inevitably extend into society itself and through that into each individual's morality and psychology. The historical trend has thus been a shift from the political to the social. In other words, what were considered purely political issues one century ago became economic ones in the late nineteenth century and then in this century have become social and psychological ones. That is why in these modern times, sociology has become such an important field of study. However, Mayo believed there was a serious disconnect between theory and practice in the sociological research of his day. He believed there are two kinds of knowledge: one, the knowledge acquired through direct experience and the other, the result of in-depth, abstract thinking. Knowledge from direct experience can be used to demonstrate, experiment, and reproduce but is not easy to impart to others; the second kind of knowledge (indirect theoretical knowledge) is more easily communicated through signs such as language, forms, and charts. That is why sociology instruction in universities tends to focus more on this kind of knowledge and less on the first kind.

Fei: And yet, we must not forget that science originates from firsthand observation and that it relies on proper techniques. It can only develop by employing experimental and systematic methods to further advance existing successful techniques. Sociology is the same; firsthand data must be collected from real life.

Fang: Mayo said that the sociology of his day, though well developed, was limited mainly to postgraduate degree topics. Students were taught how to write books discussing the works of others. There was no sociology on real-life topics or study of how people worked together. Students had very little frequent or direct contact with social reality; instead they spent their time buried in the library, going over old formulae instead of trying to experiment with and master new techniques. As a result, what they wrote was often divorced from social reality, sometimes even behind the times, and unable to keep abreast of developments. I feel that we also have this problem in China today, so we need to take note.

Fei: Indeed, excellent, please continue.

Fang: Another American sociologist, Daniel Bell, wrote *The Coming of Post-Industrial Society*[1] in which he points out that in agrarian society, humans had to

[1] *The Coming of Post-Industrial Society: A Venture in Social Forecasting,* New York: Basic Books, 1973.

deal with nature in an industrial society with physical objects but in postindustrial society, interpersonal relations take center stage. He wrote this in the 1960s, 29 years after Mayo's work, which indicates that the West has been preoccupied for a very long time with the role of interpersonal relations in a society with advanced science and technology. But we are only just starting this process. Mayo has an important chapter in his book called "The Seamy Side of Progress" in which he points out that scientific progress is all well and good, but it also has many negative effects. Of course, today there are a great many articles and books on this subject, but in his time, he was one of the earliest to be sensitive to the issue. This too is something we in China are only just starting to face today.

Fei: Very well put. Now I'll say a few words. I have just finished writing an article titled *Notes on R.E. Park*[2] which is going to press as we speak. You can see it next time you come. Park was my professor, about the same age as Mayo, and he died in the 1940s. Mayo also died in the 1940s, correct?

Fang: Yes, in 1949.

Fei: Both are historical figures of the past. So the point here is how to look at history, how to learn from history? Indeed they are gone, they belong to a past generation, but is what they wrote about out of date for us today? Well, that depends on how you approach the issue. Today China is at a different level of development from the West, so to compare the two we must find a time in its development that corresponds to ours now. All these people have passed on. We certainly cannot go back to farming like our grandfathers and fathers. And yet our development is only just now entering the period of industrialization. You say we lag behind by half a century, indeed it could be that long, but no matter what, we are definitely behind.

I first visited the United States in 1944, during the War Against Japanese Aggression (1937–1945). I wrote an article called *First Visit to America.*[3] You can take this back today and read it. Mayo was my professor's friend. He came from Australia, my professor was Polish, and they were close because they had similar ideas. My professor was an anthropologist in Britain; Mayo headed the Harvard Business School in the United States. At the time, he was doing some of the most advanced research in industrial transformation. Thanks to my professor, I went to visit him at Harvard, and he kept me on and that's when I wrote a book based on prior work in China. A student of mine named Shi Guoheng (a graduate of Southwestern Associated Universities) had written a work in Kunming called *Labor in a Kunming Factory.*[4] We had set up a research institute in Kunming where I studied rural society and wrote *Earthbound China: A Study of Rural Economy in*

[2] Full title "Notes on R.E Park – Rereading Park's Sociology" (in Chinese, *Paike biji –chongwen Paike shehuixue* 《补课札记——重温派克社会学》), in Fei Xiaotong, *Legacy, Catching Up, Learning* (in Chinese, *Shi cheng, buke, zhixue* 《师承·补课·治学》), Beijing: Joint Publishing Company, 2001.

[3] Fei Xiaotong, *First Visit to America* (in Chinese, *Chu fang meiguo* 《初访美国》), Chongqing: US Office of War Information, 1945.

[4] Shi Guoheng, *Labor in a Kunming Factory* (in Chinese, *Kun chang laogong* 《昆厂劳工》), Shanghai: The Commercial Press, 1944. The English version *China Enters the Machine Age* was translated by Fei and published by Harvard University Press, 1945.

Yunnan.[5] We were investigating Chinese society from the two perspectives of industry and agriculture.

I went to the United States in 1944 because it joined World War II, and our countries had become allies. The Americans invited China to send over ten professors for a visit, and I was one of them. At the end of the visit, I went to Harvard and stayed four months. I went to see Mayo and told him that, because of the War Against Japanese Aggression, many factories had moved from Shanghai to Kunming in Yunnan. People who had been farmers for generations suddenly became factory workers, and there were many problems. We noticed that peasants had a hard time entering modern industry. That was actually the real beginning of modern Chinese industrialization. Peasants living in the interior of the country had never seen large machines before, especially large modern machines. Shi Guoheng had started studying these new workers. Mayo became very interested when I told him about this. He said that he and his colleagues had not witnessed the earliest stages of industrialization in the United States since, by the time they were born, it had already advanced to a considerable level, and urbanization had already occurred. They had never met, much less studied, those farmers who directly became industrial workers. He was intrigued and asked me to translate *Labor in a Kunming Factory* there and then. Its English title was *China Enters the Machine Age*.[6] In it, I argued that when peasants become workers, a social transformation occurs. Mayo was very pleased with my writings and said it was important to record this transformation. His wife even worked with me to revise the final translation. The book was published in English. I have found it again and am having it translated back into Chinese.

This represents a shift in human society from one without machines to one with mechanization. This is a major change. China's mechanization of the hinterland really began during the War Against Japanese Aggression. The coastal regions had started somewhat earlier. Zhang Jian of Nantong was one of the earliest Chinese industrial entrepreneurs. When my father was teaching at Tongzhou, he got to know him and they became friends. Zhang started off in textiles, and later his business was taken over by the Rong family, which is Rong Yiren's family. I was born just as Zhang was starting up. My name is Fei Xiaotong in memory of Tongzhou. That was 90 years ago, nearly a century ago.

Fang: In that sense, China's industrialization was not that late but has developed rather slowly. Would that be because of deep-rooted traditional culture and resistance to external influences?

Fei: Definitely so. Another reason, though, is the sheer size of the country. By the 1940s, industrialization had only just reached Kunming (in Yunnan province). Wuhan was one of the earliest places. Zhang Zhidong first introduced Western industry there, before I was born, so that's over a century ago. I grew up as China industrialized, whereas in the United States, this process had begun during the

[5] Hsiao-tung Fei and Chi-I Chang, *Earthbound China: A Study of Rural Economy in Yunnan*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1945. In Chinese, *Yunnan Sancun* 《云南三村》.

[6] Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1944.

previous generation, which means there is nearly a century between the starting points of industrialization in our countries. That's why many of the things we are looking into now are all in the past for them. So we must not only study their current experiences but also learn about those in the initial and middle periods of industrialization. We must compare their ideas and culture from that time with our present situation, because what happened to them *then* may well be what is happening to us *now* or will happen to us. In my book *Notes on R.E. Park*, I wrote: "Are Park's ideas out of date? It is possible that what is outdated in the US may still have great relevance for us, because what he encountered in his time is exactly what we are experiencing now, or will experience in the future."

What's more, by comparing their *then* with our *now*, we can understand why they thought the way they did. So it is worth our while to fully grasp the thinking of that group of people, to understand why certain things happened and why they developed those ideas. From the changes they underwent, we can better foresee what will happen to us. The problem for us now, though, is that two transformations are occurring at the same time: one is the civilization of machines and the other of information. What I mean is that, for them back then, these two cultural shifts occurred one after the other, but for us they are happening simultaneously, so they overlap.

This complicates matters considerably, so the problems we will encounter will be much more complex than theirs. But without an understanding of theirs back then, it will be difficult to resolve ours now. That's why I believe we must fully grasp the theories that grew out of that period. Social sciences made great strides at that time, and I believe we should be doing the same today. Sociology is extremely important at this moment, and we are lucky to be living through it.

Park died in 1944, but Mayo died in 1949 so I was able to meet him when I was in the United States in 1944. He had looked into the problems of industrialization, which was only just beginning in China. I had initiated some study as I said before and hoped we could continue our investigation on how peasants became workers in the early industrialization process. I wanted to continue the research and hoped Shi Guoheng would carry on, but he went to France to study, and when he returned the war was over and he did not continue his research. Later, he went to Tsinghua to be an administrator, so there was no one to do the research. If it had continued, by now it would be very significant. It's a real pity that the project was discontinued and remains a blank in China today. This is a real loss, and no one is doing it now. After the opening up and reforms, I wrote an article about this.

Picking up the research today would be difficult because although farmers are still becoming workers, they are already very familiar with industrialization, unlike the peasants in those early days. That's why this research is not feasible anymore.

Fang: These comments of yours are a reminder that many historical changes have to be recorded as they occur; otherwise, it is too late and they are lost. This means that sociology and anthropology must follow their times very closely.

Fei: Of course, there are still such changes occurring in China today, since after the reforms and opening up, farmers are still continuing to migrate to the cities; it's just that there are very few places as cut off and isolated as 50 years ago.

In the Northwestern regions, which are being developed now, there are some places that are still in the early stages of industrialization and others that have not even begun yet. It would be very interesting to study them. There are two situations in China today: one is industry moving to the countryside to become township enterprises; the other is farmers leaving the land to go to factories in the cities, to become urban workers. These are both very interesting processes. They represent a huge shift. After all, genuine social transformation means the transformation of people. Many phenomena that no longer exist in the West still exist in China, except they are a bit more complicated, because premodern issues have not been resolved yet, but modern and postmodern issues have already appeared.

Fang: China's development is very uneven. It is said that in Beijing there are ten million computers linked to the Internet, totally integrated with the rest of the world and already part of the information age, and yet there are remote villages that have not even started industrialization.

Fei: That's why when we are studying such a historical process, we must not look at things in terms of absolutes but must compare the processes of development. At this point, we should be focusing on the West's industrialization path from its early stages through to its last, to see what happened along the way. Mayo wrote his book during the middle to last stages of industrialization, that is, toward the end of World War II.

Fang: By the end of the war, Western industrial civilization was already quite mature, and from then on it gradually moved into a postindustrial stage.

Fei: Postindustrialization probably began with the appearance of the computer. I have visited the United States three times, in 1944, 1947, and 1980. During first two times the United States was still in the age of capital economy, and the last time it had entered the age of the knowledge economy, that is, the information age. This is the time when people begin to reflect on industrial civilization and start dealing with a string of negative effects it has created, such as damage to the environment and loss of ecological balance.

Fang: We have these problems too now: environmental pollution and destruction of ecological balance.

Fei: That's why China has to deal with two problems simultaneously, on the one hand, develop and grow, and on the other protect the environment and try to avert the mistakes the West made. Indeed, your generation has a very hard task ahead! Industrialization has not ended, and yet new, postindustrial issues have appeared. We are still lagging behind in industrial civilization, but as the postindustrial one grows, we must seize this opportunity to understand which stage we are presently in and what our current and future problems will be. We must be absolutely clear-headed about this. We must understand that we are in the middle of an overlap of two developmental periods where changes are intertwined. Our industrial base is still quite weak and in fact is still rooted in the rural economy. We have not put agrarian society completely behind us. Preindustrial issues have still not been totally resolved. Everyone must understand this situation and just where we presently are in the process of social change.

Our discussion today is about two issues: One is industrial civilization, or the problems of a market economy; the other is postindustrial civilization, or the problems of a knowledge economy. We need to figure out how to resolve the tension between them.

Fang: Chinese sociology and anthropology should concentrate on the specific problems in our country, by carrying out social investigations and long-term field studies. However, there are not many people doing this. Instead, many scholars are more enthusiastic about applying ready-made foreign theories, without in-depth, practical research and observation of key local Chinese issues.

Fei: This work has not really started in China yet, and it will take some time to establish this kind of thinking. First of all, our research must start by assessing our historical stage. By this I do not mean within the total span of our long history but specifically now, that is, where are we in terms of development, and what stage are we in now? After all, industrialization itself can be broken down into a number of phases, so which one have we reached? Once we know that, the direction of our research should become clearer. Not only is our overall industrial stage different from the West, just within China itself, regions and areas vary in their pace of change. Of course, as we try to reach the same level of development as the West, we needn't take as much time because we are coming from behind and don't necessarily have to follow the old path and can take some shortcuts instead.

The world is evolving very fast and though our industrialization is not finished, the information age is already upon us, and the new culture and ways of thinking are having a huge impact on China. This means that in many ways we are also developing at the same pace as the West.

Fang: When the reforms and opening up first began (in 1978), it was hard for us to understand many of the cultural phenomena in the West, simply because our national conditions were so dissimilar, and our social development was at a different stage.

My earliest training is in the fine arts, and at the time I had difficulty understanding some of the avant-garde artists from abroad. The spirit of much of their work was very destructive, and it was completely different from the artistic forms of the agrarian age. Mayo noted in his book that the first doubts about the progressive nature of industrial civilization were in fact expressed by artists. Philosophers and social scientists may use rational analysis and logic to examine this world, but artists are the ones who really feel things directly with the heart. Such people are extremely sensitive to the external world, and their emotional reactions to it often appear earlier than rational thinking and logical deduction, which is why, at a time when everyone else was singing the praises of industrial civilization, artists had already observed its darker side. They were the first to talk about breaking with convention and pursuing individual expression; they were the first to advocate a return to nature and a simpler way of life. It was this that caused Gauguin to leave busy Paris for the South Pacific islands, to seek inspiration from the indigenous people there, turning him into the founder of primitivism. It was a similar search that led Picasso to the primitive drawings and sculptures of Africa for inspiration, leading to the creation of Cubism. Matisse drew artistic nourishment from the patterns on Eastern carpets and folk art paper cuts to develop Fauvism. Later, instal-

lation art, Dadaism, and performance art were even more forward looking and experimental. At the time, many artists in China, including myself, had great difficulty understanding these schools of art. However, now I can, because we are also beginning to face similar issues.

The experimental and vanguard nature of avant-garde art is actually closely linked with postindustrial culture. In agrarian society, individuals base their lifestyles on the past experiences of their fathers and ancestors; in industrial society, they focus on the present and try to find their way by understanding current reality; in contrast, the postindustrial society looks to the future, and individuals must constantly look ahead to decide their path. However, it is hard to plan one's future in postindustrial society, which is also the information age. The experiences of parents are no longer a guide; their way of life can no longer be replicated. The future is uncertain, without any pattern to follow or copy. Life becomes unknowable, so each person's life is like an experiment, full of novelties, unpredictable events, and new opportunities, and thus all sorts of conjectures and actions are possible. This is what avant-garde art is attempting to express.

Fei: This is the spirit of innovation, which is so important in the lives of modern people. To truly and deeply understand a culture or a style of art, it is necessary to place it within the context of its specific time and social background.

Fang: That is so true. The art of different periods expresses the cultural spirit of those periods. In an agrarian society, art was expected to imitate nature and copy the ancestors, but in a forward-looking modern industrial society, there is no place for art that merely imitates, and so innovation becomes of the essence.

For backward-looking traditional societies, social change was slow, but in a modern society driven by innovation, social change is rapid and constantly breaks new ground, so society adapts, and people must constantly adjust too. However, this also creates distressing problems because the change is too fast and people's ways of thinking cannot keep up. Science and technology are evolving so quickly that everyone must learn new skills and knowledge for fear of being left behind. The result is culture and social values are neglected, including in the education of children where the only thing that counts now is school results. If culture and social values and natural science are out of balance, the result will be like a person with lopsided growth: strong limbs (science and technology) but an immature head (culture and social values). This is very dangerous. A person needs clear and logical thinking to control his body. If a society lacks rational thinking to restrain its strong limbs, things will start to go wrong.

Mayo talked about this in his book, "We have learned how to destroy scores of thousands of human beings in a moment of time: we do not know how systematically to set about the task of inducing various groups and nations to collaborate in the tasks of civilization. It is not the atomic bomb that will destroy civilization. But civilized society can destroy itself—finally, no doubt, with bombs—if it fails to understand intelligently and to control the aids and deterrents to co-operation."[7]

[7] Elton Mayo, *The Social Problems of an Industrial Civilization*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1975, p. xvi.

Mayo wrote this over half a century ago, yet the problems he identified have not been resolved and have even gotten worse. At the time, he only observed the instability in social order caused by the imbalance of science and social values, and he had not witnessed the ecological imbalance and environmental pollution brought about by mankind's blind development. Of course, the West has already begun to advocate more social values, but China still does not seem to be doing so.

Fei: Actually, even the West is not doing enough. As for China, it's not a question of doing enough or not, it's a question of understanding the issue or not. Culture is not abstract, it's a kind of resource, an invisible asset. Like natural resources, it must be protected, but it can also be developed and used. This issue is not often discussed, but next time we will examine it.

Fang: I have just written a paper on cultural ecology. Next time I will bring it over and get your comments.

Fei: That's a fine concept, but it only looks at protection. Cultural assets are different, they can be developed and used. Protection is not just leaving things there without touching them but also making them serve the present. The question is, how to protect them, how to use them? These are the big questions. Why don't you give this some more thought and look into the theoretical aspects of cultural assets that can then be applied in practice?

Fang: Maybe it's because I'm too conservative, but I am always afraid of destruction, because I think Man is the most destructive creature on earth. Some things can be recovered and restored, but others cannot. Natural and cultural ecology are like that. We've already discussed how science and social values and culture must be taught together, or else the faster science and technology develop, the greater the destruction of human society and the environment we depend on. Science and technology are neutral, they can be used by both rational and irrational people alike; they can advance society but also destroy the whole world. This means the thinking and values of those who make use of them are very important. These people must have a deep understanding of human societies and cultures; they cannot merely be experts in one specific area with only partial knowledge. The societies of the future need all-round people, not just specialists in one field alone. Today, we are basically training people who only have one area of expertise, and we have neglected to educate them in a rounded way. In the past, Chinese culture valued both abilities and morality, but now this "morality" is neglected, including in the kind of parental upbringing of children today. Skills and specialized knowledge are not enough; morals, values, behavior, and the ability to get along and cooperate with others should all be part of a person's education.

Fei: Mayo talked a great deal about this. The ability to cooperate is not only on an interpersonal level but also on a country-to-country level, between nations and ethnicities. Only by resolving these relationships properly can there be peace for all.

Let's get back to the main topic of today's discussion. I think we have looked at two issues. The first is how to determine where China is in the development process, in other words, which stage are we at in the process of industrial civilization, and what sort of changes are taking place? Here, we can certainly refer to Western experiences because they have gone through all this before us, so we can look at the

issues they encountered and see what they did. This is helpful to us and we can certainly learn from them. The second issue is the complexity of the development of industrial civilization in China. This is because some remote places are still in the agrarian age, while many others have already entered the industrial era, and in the large cities the information age is already upon us. This means that in our country, preindustrial, industrial, and postindustrial civilizations are interwoven and overlap. You should tease out and describe these complexities and what makes them different. Precisely because of this complexity and these distinct features, we cannot simply copy the West's experiences but must find our own way.

In addition, we must grow our economy, but not too fast. We must not forget our foundations. Protection and development must go hand in hand, so we not only grow our economy but also protect our natural ecology and our cultural resources. We need a longer perspective, and we need sustainable development. However, we cannot be too slow either; we can't always be looking behind us and fear moving forward. Yet to advance takes courage and innovation, and this is not easy. We need the spirit of innovation, which has been lacking over the last century, causing us to fall behind and forcing us to follow others. A nation without innovation is in big trouble, so we must really take this seriously. My generation is passing away and your generation has an arduous task ahead. You must find your bearings, take a firm stand, and move forward steadily.

Fang: Our conversation today has been extremely enlightening. Thank you so much, Mr. Fei.

Chapter 15
Cultural Issues in the Course of Global Integration

Fei: Yesterday I read your paper "Raising the Issue of Imbalance of Cultural Ecology" (*Wenhua shengtai shiheng wenti de tichu*)[1] twice and have written my comments in the margins; I have also made pencil markings in places. You may take this copy back and look it over at leisure.

Now, however, I would like to discuss the contents with you. First of all, I think this is a well-written paper. You have put a great deal of thought into it, laying out the relationships between human cultures and the interactions of human culture with natural and man-made environments and proposing a number of important ideas that are very thought provoking. However, I don't entirely agree with you in a number of places. For instance, you use many biological phenomena to back up your arguments about culture, and I have to disagree with you there. First, because the human world is not the same as the biological world; it is not an organism and has its own laws. Second, anthropological research must be scientific and accurate, so if you equate cultural phenomena with biological ones, then you must obtain comparable concrete evidence which is very difficult, and the research then loses its scientific basis. I also disagree with you when you liken distinctive cultures to different kinds of living organisms because while living organisms eventually die, cultures do not, they evolve.

Cultures grow according to their own laws, just as living organisms do according to theirs, and though culture has its origins in living beings, it has already transcended them and risen to a new level. One cannot mix these two levels. Of course, culture does not always live forever, for example, the Maya culture has disappeared and we still do not know why. Native American Indian culture and Australian Aboriginal culture are on the verge of extinction. Our own Chinese Hezhe people

[1] In Chinese, "*Wenhua shengtai shiheng wenti de tichu* (《文化生态失衡问题的提出》)." After review by Mr. Fei Xiaotong and revisions by the author, the paper was published in the *Journal of Peking University* (*Beijing daxue xuebao,* 《北京大学学报》), social science edition, vol. 3, May 2001.

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X. Fei, *Globalization and Cultural Self-Awareness*, China Academic Library,
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are also at a dangerous point. What should we do? This is the core question that you raise in your paper.

Fang: My main thesis is that, as modern civilization sweeps the world, no one knows how many traditional native cultures are disappearing every day. No one pays much attention or has much regret when a single primitive local tradition vanishes, but when many of these cultural groupings disappear, is this not a destruction of a kind of cultural ecology? Isn't this something we should all consider? Just as human-centered behavior is causing a sharp decline in the biosphere, so Western-centric culture is causing a sharp decline in the number of cultures in the culture sphere. This is telling us that, just as we are now experiencing the destruction of natural ecology and decline in natural resources, we shall also be faced with the deterioration of the cultural ecology and the loss of cultural resources.

Fei: I believe this issue you raise is very timely and also merits discussion. However, I think it has to be debated on the level of culture not of biology. You cannot use biology as theoretical justification nor apply biological laws to cultural phenomena. Examples from biology can of course be used, but only as analogies, not for making direct deductions.

The issue here is how to view culture. If I understand you correctly, you are discussing the relationship between indigenous and outside culture, that is, the effects of outside culture and how they impact the laws of cultural development. This involves innate laws peculiar to cultural change. On the one hand, cultures evolve and transform within the limitations of their own environment, which forces them to continuously adapt in order to survive; on the other hand, they are subject to external cultural influences and contacts that push them forward. All national cultures have evolved within very specific natural and human environments, and to this day, many people still live in a particular traditional environment and retain their culture. However, in the face of rapid globalization, should these traditional civilizations be preserved? This is the issue you raise of integration and indigenous culture.

Fang: In my paper, I point out that culture is a composite of technologies, social structures, and beliefs. It adapts to its own natural living environment and to the surrounding cultures with which it competes. This adaptation consists of two aspects: innovation and preservation. The former is dynamic and puts pressure on the culture to adapt its structures and forms to its environment; the latter is a stabilizing influence that preserves the adjusted and appropriate structures and forms. The end result of the process of cultural innovation is an organized whole, made up of technologies, social structures, and beliefs. It is constrained by the possibilities of the natural world and by the influences of external cultures. The consequence of this cultural adaptation spurred by innovation is the huge diversity of cultures created within different environments. In other words, the variety of natural resources, geographical environments, and development processes have created cultural diversity, and in turn, it is precisely this cultural diversity that has enabled mankind to make use of so many kinds of natural resources. However, industrial civilization has created a new kind of physical environment that has broken the close link between culture and its natural surroundings. Thanks to advanced production based on

mechanization, it has created a second kind of system, an artificial environment. In this kind of world, modes of production, even lifestyles, are no longer limited by natural conditions or geographical surroundings; they can adapt to all regions and countries. The technologies of this advanced industrial civilization have emerged from the womb of Western culture and have no cultural legitimacy for the non-Western world, and yet when they migrate there, they reproduce their original culture and undermine the local ones so that diversity and differences are reduced, even eliminated.

Fei: That was very clearly expressed and I agree with you. I understand you to mean that traditional cultures have evolved in different natural and geographical surroundings, including interaction with other nearby cultures. However, modern culture, on the other hand, has developed and grown within a single, artificial physical environment and within a single artificial space, created by identical science and technology, which will in the end result in an integrated, world market economy. Consequently, the trend is inevitably toward a reduction and ironing out of cultural differences.

Modern science and technology born of Western culture have created an artificial physical world and the basis for a new modern culture or a new human world. To fit in, all nations will be compelled to adapt by giving up their traditional, local cultures. In other words, the appearance of an integrated world will create a new civilization for mankind based on this new artificial physical environment. The question now is, is this new culture an advancement for mankind or not? At this point, it's hard to say.

Fang: It seems to me that this kind of culture recreated within an artificial physical environment resembles those varieties of man-made high-yield seeds, where the crops grow well, produce a lot, are easy to cultivate, and have a reduced growth cycle. In short, nothing but merits, they are not only better than the wild variety but even beating out the traditional cultivated strains. Not surprisingly, everyone prefers them, and many places have given up old traditional seeds in favor of these new, more productive ones. For most people, this seems like a good thing, a triumph of science, and mankind winning over nature. However, I happened by chance to read in a newspaper one day of how in Hubei province a certain place had imported a kind of high-yield soybean which had done very well at first but had then suddenly been hit by an insect blight which withered all the shoots. Scientists looked into the matter and determined that there were weaknesses in the genome that made the plant susceptible to natural enemies. The solution was to find a closely related, wild leguminous strain which had evolved ways to survive in adverse conditions and to combine its genes with the man-made one, to give it resistance to disease and insects.

This short report was quite a revelation to me, because I had never realized that wild plants could be so much harder and more vigorous than artificially created ones. Even less had I considered the importance of their interrelatedness. I looked up other materials and learned that the only way to prevent species extinction is to preserve a sufficient number of genetic varieties that can adapt to environmental variations. A decrease in genetic diversity increases the danger to the species, and

sometimes, if a critical line is crossed, a whole species could be wiped out forever. If we examine the history of agriculture, we find that genetic diversity exists not only in the wild relatives of grain crops but also in the earliest cultivated varieties of selected strains. They are genetically related to food crops grown all over the world and have been selected and grown since earliest times. Unfortunately, many of these strains are now under threat from the spread of modern high-yield varieties.

A 1990 international conference in Malas, India, stated in its concluding document that the unfortunate reality was that many countries, knowingly or not, were losing their traditional crop strains to the spread of high-yield varieties, thus increasing the possibility of having only a single strain left. The result of such genetic depletion is the elimination of many kinds of crops and a possible food crisis for mankind. It is this example that set me thinking about culture. If only one culture prevails, it will mean not only that many relatively primitive indigenous cultures will disappear, but also the native cultures within many developed countries will also vanish. Will this also lead to a crisis in human society and culture? That is what pushed me to write this paper.

Fei: Gaining insights from biology is certainly acceptable, but you should not use them as the main justifications for your argument. After all, though culture does originate from biological beings, it is one step removed from them, reaching another level. The biosphere and culture sphere are both part of the universe, but they are different and have their own distinctive features.

You argue that human society needs diverse cultures and multiple wisdoms to develop. There is no doubt about that, and the reasons for the differences between traditional cultures stem precisely from the different conditions and environments in which they evolved. Now the whole world is changing and they must too, but how? It's hard to say. This is a very profound and thought-provoking question. I mentioned that I agree with your comment that Westerners have used modern science and technology to build a single, artificial physical environment that will be the basis for a new, broad, integrated cultural one. How non-Western peoples should adapt to this and how they should become part of this integrated world are intractable issues, because they start from very different cultural fundamentals and evolved from distinctive conditions.

What's more, Western countries themselves are still struggling to adapt to this new physical environment they have created. This means that the material and the spiritual are not truly in step yet. A new physical civilization requires a new set of cultural values and new ethical and moral criteria, but at this point, such guidelines are not completely developed yet. They are still being explored and refined. Human development has created a new human world separated from and in opposition to the natural one. The result will be the destruction of the environment and pollution of rivers and air, and the earth will no longer be suitable for humankind and other life forms. In other words, man has created his new artificial physical and cultural environment, but he is not adapted to it yet. In addition, there are many less advanced countries that have not taken part in creating this new environment and are still a long way from it. Expecting them to adapt will be even more difficult.

During this era of rapid change, we often hear strident racist and nationalist voices. These take many different external forms, but in essence, they all express a

yearning to belong in a chaotic world that lacks models and guidelines. Clearly, world culture is not evolving in a harmonious or balanced way. I see two problems here. The first one concerns the non-Western countries, whose present cultural traditions are not in step with modern social developments. They have to find a way to adapt to the new culture and society. The second problem is how the Western countries are going to get along with these developing countries and their evolving societies, so as to avoid cultural antagonisms and ensure peaceful coexistence in the world. This requires all nations to develop a sense of cultural self-awareness, that is, everyone must gain a better understanding of their own culture. I agree with most of what you say in your paper, which has achieved a certain depth of analysis. What you need to do is lay out your arguments very clearly so that everyone will reflect upon and discuss the issues.

Fang: Thank you for your advice. I believe that mankind is facing an important turning point, in which a world made up of traditional independent nation states is changing into a world society that is closely connected and interdependent and integrated on the basis of hi-tech and science. A highly industrial, technological system is forming in which conflicts occur easily and which will suffer from a series of economic, social, and, especially, ecological challenges. Ecology includes both natural and cultural environments. Natural ecology is now under worldwide scrutiny in many fields, because man's survival is directly at stake. However, very few people are concerned about cultural ecology. It is not generally recognized that there is a very close link between natural and cultural ecological imbalances, caused by the penetration into every corner of the world of a powerful Western culture.

The modern industrial civilization founded on this culture is intent on pursuing the greatest economic advantage. It is wasteful and extravagant, leading to the depletion of many valuable and nonrenewable resources and the pollution and destruction of the natural environments upon which all living things depend. Superficially, one might say this is the result of science and technology, but in fact, it is the result of a set of cultural values. After all, not all human societies pursue extravagance, ease, and waste or believe that man can conquer and rule over nature. This means that, in the future, science and technology will not be sufficient to resolve ecological destruction or environmental pollution. That's because they are neutral and at the service of people who behave according to different cultural values. And that's why in the future we need to focus not so much on rapid development of science and technology but more on readjusting our cultural values, realigning our relations with nature, and reenvisioning our universe. In this process, we will need not only Western culture but also everything that other cultures and religions can offer. This is the only way we will create a new kind of culture that will save mankind from the present dire situation. If, however, in this process, we lose the richness of diverse civilizations, we will lose the sources of much priceless wisdom. I am thinking especially of those premodern cultures that have evolved over ages of interaction with nature. Perhaps they contain certain valuable genes and experience that will help us in our future development. Their importance to our modern culture may be similar to the importance of wild plant strains to our man-made, high-yield ones. Do you think my analogy here is inappropriate?

Fei: Your remarks on cultural diversity are very important. There are many people today who hope to rely on these different traditional cultures to resist the single, modern one, but I'm afraid this will fail in the end. That's because we have before us a new society and a new world, but history never retraces its steps. So what are we to do? There have been two opinions on this in academic circles. One is to preserve one's national cultural independence, but as I said just now, this is very difficult in the face of rapid global integration. The other is "total Westernization," as proposed by Hu Shih[2] back in the 1930s. But this will not work either, because it is impossible for people to forget its own past and history to start over again. Cultural traditions and deeply rooted customs have accumulated bit by bit over the centuries and are inculcated since childhood, so unless this nation disappears or is destroyed altogether, change will not come easily, if at all. That is why conflict between the two cultures becomes unavoidable.

I believe Western culture has many strengths but it is not perfect, for one thing it has not dealt well with the man-nature relationship. This means the human world it has created is also imperfect, which is why we need the participation of other cultures. It is impossible to compel all cultures to be the same; no one can or should accept that. Anyway, Western culture itself has many things unresolved, such as internal social tensions, economic and ecological issues, etc. The world is everyone's world so everyone should have a part in making it, but how can we get everyone, each with his own culture and background, to join hands to create a new common world? It's a question worth exploring. Since it's also a new issue, it cannot be resolved using only traditional concepts and methods. We probably need new thinking and methods.

Fang: That's precisely why I believe it's so important that we preserve cultural diversity. In other words, as mankind enters the new millennium, we must not only celebrate all the many successes in different areas, but we must also sit back and reflect upon where we are now and where we wish to go. That's why we need new vision and new perspectives for the future, including a new understanding of less advanced national cultures, as well as nonlinear thinking.

Over the last couple of centuries, man has been extremely successful in grasping the linear relationships between natural objects and mechanical systems. However, man's rational understanding and control of nonlinear natural systems, particularly complex ecological ones, is still quite superficial. Scientists on the cutting edge of research concede that our relationship with the universe must always relate back to physics and biology, because all things coexisting and evolving in the universe and the biosphere are always interconnected and in communication. In this delicate and subtle interaction, the human spirit is an unexpected active participant because primitive man and certain native peoples are much more sensitive to outside forces and commune better with their surroundings than modern man who only believes in

[2] 1891–1962, highly influential modern scholar, historian, writer, poet, philosopher, leader of the New Culture Movement in 1919. He held senior positions in academia and government. Hu has left a considerable body of writings on ethics, philosophy, literature, education, archaeology, and history.

science. They frequently employ much more intuitive ways of communicating with nature that transcend sight, hearing, and touch. Their shamans and diviners appear to have superhuman powers of perception and intuition, what science calls variant consciousness. Some scholars claim that this state of being is fundamental to human psychology and that it can range from a state of near madness at one end to the highest levels of creativity, perception, and genius at the other. A feature of variant consciousness is that it allows for a heightened connection between individuals, as well as between humans and the universe, and that it transcends ordinary powers of communication and interaction.

Conventional science might view these abilities as primitive or even nonsensical, but those who enter this state frequently possess abnormal powers that allow them to predict changes to the ecological system. They are able to maintain a link between their own spirit and the universe and nature. Many primitive peoples, thanks to their long history of living close to nature, are far more sensitive to the climate and to the rhythms of the natural world than modern man. The science of the last couple of centuries has been able to extend man's external capabilities through machines and equipment, but man's innate powers have not developed and in fact are rapidly declining. Modern man pursues efficiency, more material possessions, and rapid economic growth, which have indeed raised material production to unprecedented heights, and man's capacity to conquer the world has also increased greatly. However, in the process, people have lost many innate abilities, such as direct sensitivity to objects, communing with nature, nurturing intimacy, and even the ability to love. Mankind has expanded physical space but has stifled spiritual space. That's why, in the coming century, mankind will not only face a material revolution but also a spiritual one that will kindle inherent human potential and creativity, uncover new insights into interpersonal relationships, rediscover the connection between man and the universe and man and nature, and encourage people to reexamine their national traditions, thus leading to a deeper understanding and analysis. This will give us more historical space and cultural knowledge so that we can reflect upon the world, upon advanced science, and upon ourselves to find a new path to the future. If, on the contrary, we abandon many fine cultural traditions because we consider them backward, so that nations and countries lose cultural self-confidence and the roots of their creativity, the result will be huge limitations on future cultural evolution and the loss of many new possibilities.

Fei: In other words, different cultures must be permitted to grow and evolve in their own way. Western culture and its advanced technologies are creating a new human world that is still not perfect. So no country or people or culture should be pushed into joining it, since not all can accept it. This is one side of the issue. The other side is even if accepted, the matter is still not resolved, because the Western world itself has many internal unsolved social problems, like drug use, AIDS, social violence, racial discrimination, etc. Externally how to coexist with other cultures is still not resolved, so conflicts between nations will continue to occur.

The huge issue facing us is how to create and build a common world culture. No one knows at this point. This is the most fundamental and important issue that you have touched upon. A globalized market economy requires cultural rules and

a social order that everyone can follow, even a common language and codes of conduct. Inevitably this will shake the local basis upon which all indigenous cultures are built. The trend seems to be moving toward a delocalization of culture. However, this puts mankind in a double bind: on the one hand, how to pursue material civilization while avoiding pollution of the environment and natural ecology and, on the other, how to create an integrated economy while preserving cultural diversity.

A fundamental problem with culture today is that man has created a new situation which is not entirely within his control: it functions according to its own laws that at times are beyond human agency. This situation is currently evolving very fast, and it's getting faster. It's hard to say where we will eventually end up. Man should be able to control certain aspects of this change but so far has failed. To be quite candid, it seems to me things are getting out of hand and are leading to possible destruction. For many local cultures, this new integrated environment created by Western culture is not something they can adapt to, for the simple reason that their cultural origins are different. Yet the single world market and globalized economic system compels the creation of a common set of ethics and values, so all cultures must transform themselves and must unconditionally give up their history and traditions. Emotionally, this is very hard to do, and objectively speaking, it's not necessarily right either. That's why we are now in a very difficult situation. What's more, it's not just a cultural issue anymore but has become a political one too because of implications of hegemonic expansion.

The material culture pursued by the West can solve many problems, but there are some it cannot, especially in the dimension of social psychology. A society full of competition and antagonism creates many problems. Destruction of natural resources and environmental pollution are also difficult issues facing Western countries. All this seems to indicate that the new, highly artificial environment created by the West is not only hard for developing countries to adapt to, but Western countries themselves are also struggling. The earth can no longer support the burden of this civilization, and the biosphere cannot adjust to the negative effects of it either. Things are not moving toward balance and tolerance but toward extremes and disequilibrium. Of course, many scholars in the West have recognized this series of issues, which explains the rise of postmodernist cultural thought, which is an attempt to stem the tide.

I believe that, in the future development of human society, the world's three major religions—Christianity, Buddhism, and Islam—must work to complement each other. There are also many other subcultures and indigenous traditions. We often judge primitive indigenous cultures to be backward and ignorant, but we must also realize that hidden within them is much wisdom we modern people do not understand. What's more, their long existence close to nature has given them an understanding of natural rhythms and ecology that is far greater than our own. That's why we should no longer think of the traditional or primitive as totally backward, irrational, not worth preserving, and to be rejected. There could be things within that our modern culture could learn from and that could become fundamental to our new cultural development.

Of course, we should also be clear that primitive and traditional cultures contain many undesirable and backward things too. These should certainly not be preserved, but we must be careful not to throw the baby out with the bathwater. We must retain all fine cultural "germplasm" and reinvigorate them, so that they can provide nourishment for mankind's future.

Fang: In biology, all seeds (and shoots) contain germplasm, which include not only the genes but a whole set of special functions that control heredity and determine how genes combine and are expressed. The future health of plants is decided by multiple, irreplaceable germplasm. Human society is the same, and its healthy growth will depend upon the continuation and preservation of diverse cultures.

Anthropologists were the first to express concern over the destruction of different cultures in the course of modernization. The well-known American anthropologist Marshall Sahlins said, "It is paradoxical that the traditions described by many anthropologists have all been tainted by Western culture, and no one can say what the original culture was really like. Many cultures have been recreated after absorbing Western cultural influences."[3] However, later he argued that there was no need to be concerned, because starting from the 1980s, most Third World migrants who had lived abroad had begun returning to their home countries to start new lives. They had learned Western technologies and lifestyles, yet their lost traditions and cultures were being restored in the form of traditional festivals, public ceremonies and rituals, kinship networks, etc. He claimed that this recovery was a new tool for innovation, that the integration and differentiation of world culture were proceeding simultaneously, that protecting national cultural traditions was widespread in Third and Fourth World countries, and that the efforts of non-Western peoples to create a new cultural outlook had eliminated the opposition between tradition and change, integration and diversity, and Westernization and indigenization. He believed that the movement toward indigenization had solved the issue of cultural diversity.[4]

In fact, all we can really say is that the mechanisms to protect national cultures are having some effect in this increasingly integrated global economy. But is this self-protection conscious or not? Is it based on a genuine understanding of one's culture and of its originality? And then there is also another issue: I don't think culture should be limited to just customs and belief systems. It should also include modes of production, forms of consumption, ways of life, and all the most basic, central elements of existence. Once these core aspects of a culture have been "integrated," do the recovered traditions truly represent the culture anymore? I am not objecting to non-Western countries' cultural development nor do I mean their native civilizations should remain untouched and unchanged; all I am saying is that I hope, on the basis of absorbing outside cultures, they will continue to conserve their originality and that this will be a dynamic force promoting truly distinctive development, not be an empty shell where the essence is lost or replaced.

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[3] Back-translated from the Chinese translation of *The Sadness of Sweetness* by Marshall Sahlins (*Tianmi de beiai*,《甜蜜的悲哀》, trans. Wang Mingming and Hu Zongze, Beijing: Joint Publishing, 2000).

[4] *Ibid*.

Fei: What you say makes a lot of sense, but you have to think a bit more about how to express it. As I see it, the real issue you are discussing in your paper is the following: we are facing a new cultural environment that is transforming the conditions under which all national cultures previously existed. All countries and peoples must adapt, otherwise they will not survive. However, the new culture is far from complete or perfect, and it faces many difficulties; consequently it must absorb nourishment from other cultures in order to grow. Just as you pointed out, traditional and primitive cultures have very different worldviews from this new culture; they look at problems in different ways yet they have all survived for many generations, which means they possess their own unique ways of existence.

At a meeting yesterday, I raised the issue of Chinese traditional medicine. I pointed out that we Chinese have lived on this earth for thousands of years without the hospital in its modern form. How did we survive? There were many practical, inexpensive ways, such as acupuncture, cupping, and *guasha*. At times, drugs were not needed to achieve a cure; in other words, there were simple ways without side effects. All this shows that there are many good things in our traditional culture worth continuing and uncovering further. How well do we really know our own culture? We need more investigation and research.

In this historical era, a brand new human world and cultural environment is taking shape. How can we both adapt to it and yet not completely lose the roots of our national civilization? This truly needs some careful study. On the one hand, we must learn the new culture and find ways to adapt to the new situation; on the other, we must develop our own traditional culture. Yet not everything traditional is good; there are many undesirable things too, so we need a deeper knowledge and understanding of it. When we say we want to develop our national culture in these new circumstances and find ways to adapt, we do not mean indiscriminately transferring our traditions into it. We need to pick and choose the parts we wish to carry on. Times have changed, conditions have changed, our living environment has changed, and the reality of the world around us has changed. The latter includes natural and man-made environments that have been radically transformed; even outer space and the ocean floor are changing! Today the man-made world is altering the natural one, and a new prospect lies before us, full of problems like the natural ecology and the cultural ecology that you mention. I think that solutions have to be diverse too. One path or method is not going to work for all, since different nations will start from their own cultures. We must be creative on the basis of our unique cultural traditions. This is what is meant by cultural self-awareness and self-renewal. This means building something new based on our own traditions, not starting everything from scratch.

Your concept of cultural ecology is a new one and deserves further exploration. As I see it though, the concept itself is not as important as how it can be applied to solving real problems and how it can help to explain things. Simply put, we are confronted with a new human world that will only be in ecological balance when everything has adapted to it. Ecology here means when the subjective aspects are adjusted to the objective ones or to the actual world. This world was originally based on nature, but now many man-made aspects have entered it. In the twenty-first century, we will be faced with an artificial environment created by Western culture.

An important problem will be how different national cultures renew themselves, and how they will coexist with other cultures.

Fang: The process you have just traced, from cultural self-awareness to sstat to cultural coexistence, has helped me sort out a number of conceptual difficulties. Our starting point is to know and develop our own culture, at the same time also finding ways to get along with different ones. In my paper, I discuss the relationships between diverse cultures, but in fact, these relationships change constantly as the environment changes.

Fei: As the relationships change, a number of important problems emerge, but resolving them is going to require more than one single concept. This needs further study. You talk about cultural ecology, and I have raised the idea of cultural adaptation, yet none has been sufficiently explored. To put it simply, humans found various ways to adapt to the objective world they lived in: that is, they created culture. Now, however, the new culture is in conflict with the natural world because they no longer fit together anymore. How to resolve this contradiction is the problem we are facing today.

Fang: I believe that this tension is created by our cultural outlook. Guided by different cultural outlooks, people have created different human worlds; now the source of the conflict lies in the fact that our modern culture no longer follows nature's laws of development. We only think about changing nature to serve us, but we have forgotten that we humans are also a part of nature, which means we not only can use it but must also be in harmony with it. The human-centric cultural outlook is at the root of the problem.

Fei: Here you are getting into the issue of the purpose of culture. What is it for? I believe it is to allow man to live a better life. Going one step further, it is to create overall a more beautiful, artistic world. With greater material, people should come to search for a more beautiful spiritual world.

Fang: I understand what you mean that man is not only a biological being but also a spiritual, creative one who seeks not only to fulfill physical needs but also to find self-expression and growth. Art is a huge space in which a person can grow and express himself. In early human civilization, art was a part of daily life and everyone could sing and dance or draw or make handicrafts. After the advent of industrial civilization, the highly specialized division of labor began to separate art from ordinary people and moved it further away from everyday life. As material conditions improve, art will return, and people will build a new spiritual and artistic realm. For modern man, art will not just be for artists anymore but will become a part of life that all can engage in. The flowering of all kinds of artistic activities represents the start of a new movement for man to transform himself; it's the sign of the coming of a new vibrant revolution.

Fei: I really hope that through these fundamental changes in thinking, mankind will build a better world, with more art and beauty. People will break away from the sole pursuit of material comfort to seek a more meaningful, spiritual enjoyment. Not only will their lives enter a higher dimension, but the burden on the earth will lighten, and environmental pollution and depletion of natural resources may also be reduced. Of course, this is my dream, and who knows if it will ever come to pass.

I just wish that people could free themselves from material greed, push aside materialism, and aspire to more things of the mind and spirit. The world of culture so fundamental to man extends beyond the biological needs of food and shelter, important as they are. As a biological organism, man needs nourishment and space, no different from other animals, but he has gone beyond them to create a cultural world, with higher spiritual needs.

The human race created the cultural world to satisfy both material and spiritual needs, but many troublesome problems have appeared. How to resolve them has been the topic of our conversation today. We have only just begun this exploration and must continue it. However, that's all for this time. I hope you continue to think about these things and write them into your paper.

Fang: Thank you, Professor Fei, I certainly will.

April, 2001

Part V

Chapter 16
Extending the Traditional Boundaries of Sociology

Now that I am over 90 years old, I have to admit that I am really getting on. Though my body and limbs no longer do my bidding, my mind still seems capable of reasoning, and it seems to me that we Chinese have accumulated many valuable things over the thousands of years of our history. Now, in a time of world turmoil, it is clear that some kind of change and innovation is urgently needed, and so my mind has been preoccupied with many issues I had previously never thought about. The conversations and discussions I have had with colleagues and students about these topics have been recorded and transcribed by them and, after my editing, are now available for others to read.

The discipline of sociology combines the features of both a "science" and the "humanities." The scientific aspect makes it an important "tool" to be "used" to resolve specific problems, such as predicting future trends within a society, investigating attitudes and behaviors of a certain group, analyzing the operations of a social organization, proposing solutions to urgent social problems, and others. However, the value of sociology is not just limited to this nature of a "tool." Modern sociology, including its spirit of scientific rationalism, is an important kind of "humanistic thinking." Sociological research and training are both some of the ways socio-humanistic thinking is cultivated. The knowledge, values, and concepts provided by sociology are absorbed into society through education and help its members to a better grasp and understanding of their relationship with society and also to a deeper self-cultivation. Refined sentiments, integrity, morality, rationalism, and fairness in attitude and action, formed through the process of "social adjustment" (*wei yu*), are all essential to a modern, quality society. Sociology must take all these humanistic needs into account when it decides on the direction of its research. Such a humanistic nature determines that its attention should be focused on basic issues like "the person," "the group," "society," "culture," and "history." These studies will lay a solid knowledge base for the discipline. China's long, rich cultural tradition and extensive sociohistorical experience contain much profound thinking and many humanistic concepts. They are an untapped treasure trove with a huge potential to advance sociology.

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The practice of some two decades of research and teaching has shown that mining China's own history and culture and exploring the basic concepts and theories of sociology through practice are extremely promising directions for Chinese academia and one of the important ways Chinese scholars can contribute to international sociology.

16.1 "Man and Nature" (*tian ren zhi ji*)

A fundamental issue in sociology is the relationship between the "biological nature" and the "social nature" of man. I must point out that sociology's definition of "biological nature" is quite different from the concept of "physiology," "life," and "organism" as defined by the fields of biology and medicine. These natural sciences single out man's "biological nature," which is comparable to other physical life forms, and examine it in isolation. Using physics and chemistry, they carry out "natural scientific" research into man, ignoring all the "nonbiological" social, spiritual, and cultural attributes. For example, when these scientists dissect a person's body parts and analyze their functions, they only consider the physiological and biological aspects; they do not take into account whether this person was a farmer, a soldier, or an intellectual. For them, these social roles are biologically meaningless. This sort of "analysis" and "separation" is a typical way of thinking and doing research in the Western natural sciences.

However, in sociology, man's "biological nature" is not some isolated, special dimension, and it's not separated from his "social nature." Quite the contrary, it's considered to be part of man's "natural attributes" in the wider sense of the word, and it's blended with "social nature" in an inclusive, enveloping way. More specifically, sociology considers "society" to be a part of the wider "nature" (including "biology") and its existence and evolution to be part of the existence and evolution of this same wider "nature." Society and nature are not seen as a "duality," even less as "opposites," but instead as the two aspects, or dimensions, of a single thing. This concept is best expressed by the ancient Chinese concept of *tian*, or Heaven. This is not in the Western sense of God, separated from and above all living beings on earth. In the Chinese sense, "Heaven" and "man" are an integrated, interwoven whole, where all man's actions and behavior take place according to the principles of "Heaven." Man cannot be totally free of or transcend this "Heaven," in the sense of "Man plans, Heaven decides." In return, Heaven also reacts to man's actions, in the sense that "Heaven repays hard work" (*tian dao chou qin*) and "Heaven complains when Man behaves badly" (*tian yuan ren nu*). Sociology also subscribes to this relationship, in that it puts "man" in the context of the wider "nature" and sees "man" as a part of "nature" and "society" which has allowed mankind to exist, as one manifestation of "nature," which forms a "oneness" with it. When we say "oneness" (*heyi*) we mean "cannot be separated from." In everyday speech, we often refer to nature and society as distinct from one another, but that is only a conceptualization needed to understand and explain them in our ordinary thinking.

From an academic perspective though, "nature" and "human society" cannot be separated, but must be considered as a whole, a unity. Laws and principles governing human society are part of those that govern nature. Conversely, natural principles, what the ancients called "the ways of Heaven," are also the principles of human society. This perspective is the basis of sociological research and allows us to position man and his external world correctly. It demonstrates the traditional Chinese view of "one into two" and "two into one" or "one can divide into two" and "two can combine into one."

To understand "man," we must place him against the background of natural evolution, to see him as the result of a natural process of change. This means that "society" and "culture" are also part of nature since they are a second environment created by man to cater to his needs. However, "culture" must also follow natural laws and principles, because man's activities use nature and its properties in many ways, and these follow natural patterns to which he must adapt. It is not possible to fundamentally alter these natural principles, to go against them or to transcend them.

The view of "oneness between man and Heaven" is not unique to China. Many different cultures subscribe to it. However, Chinese tradition has a particularly profound understanding and examination of it. Modern Chinese sociology should carry on this tradition and define "man" and "society" from the perspective of natural existence and evolution.

It's important to note that, in the contemporary period, this Chinese worldview has changed drastically. At the end of the nineteenth and at the beginning of the twentieth centuries, Chinese intellectuals rapidly embraced modern Western views on society as part of their efforts to save the nation. These views were vital to promoting the development of modern Chinese academia and laid an important foundation for it. However, it's also worth noting that, in this rush toward modernization, much was accepted uncritically without much thought, and particularly with regard to the relationship between man and nature, we accepted wholesale the Western scientific concepts separating "man" from "nature" and placing them in opposition. We gave up our traditional worldview far too lightly. Later, highly emotive slogans such as "fight heaven and earth," "conquer nature," "transform rivers and mountains," and "whatever man dares to dream of the earth will produce" regarded nature as a hostile force and were the complete opposite of our ancestors' belief in the interdependence between man and the environment, of accommodation and appreciation of nature. In the field of sociology, this meant that instead of placing man, society, and nature within a single blended system, we have consciously or unconsciously become accustomed to thinking of man and society as separate, distinct entities, unrelated to nature.

This worldview is not so much a "concept" as an "attitude" in which we see ourselves as the subjects in relation to objects, of "us" against "them." There is an "ethical" component in this that determines how we relate to things around us, starting with "man" at the center and spreading outward in concentric circles, in fact, a kind of "differential mode of association." At the core is a basic question: is man's relationship with the external world an antagonistic, hostile one, a "zero sum" game? Or

is it one of adjustment, complementarity, continuity, and accommodation? The replies reflect radically different cultural concepts and worldviews.

If the response of sociology is based on the histories and cultures of East Asian civilizations, then it will automatically emphasize a philosophy of adaptation, coexistence, and harmony. Starting from this cultural tradition leads us automatically toward the oneness of "Man" and "Nature."

16.2 The Spirit-Mind

"Human society" is indeed a part of "nature" but man himself has special innate qualities. In many ways, we consider "man" to be the highest known achievement of evolution. Of course, this is how we see ourselves, because our knowledge is still limited by our capacities and ways of perceiving, the forms of our existence, and certain temporal aspects. We can only discuss all issues within these limitations. It is impossible for us to make meaningful judgments on matters beyond our perception, such as whether the universe (*tian*) contains other forms and properties (e.g., multidimensional space, energy being, and other things beyond our imagination). However, within our realm of cognition, man clearly is special and different from the surrounding world. I once described this as follows: should other beings from outer space visit the earth, they would very quickly distinguish "man" from all the other teeming life forms. The particularities of man are an important area of research for sociologists, though not the only one, as they must also look into the similarities between man and nature. For them, understanding man's entire attributes are also part of understanding the particularities.

So what are these particularities? Or put another way, "what makes a person human"? This is an age-old debate that has produced no consensus. Such fundamental questions involve humans' basic assumptions of themselves and of the world, which frequently are the foundation for beliefs and worldviews that in turn constitute a civilization. This is why the most vigorous debates sometimes take on strong ideological overtones. In China too, different schools of thought have given different answers at different times.

Sociology that follows traditional scientific-rational values generally identifies with a scientific-rational explanation, that is, man as a living being belongs first of all to the "biological," as distinct from the "nonbiological" realm. Man's most special feature is, I believe, his possession of a "world of spirit-mind," unknown to other living organisms as far as we can confirm.

This world can be broadly described as man's "sense of consciousness" though we are still far from defining it clearly. Sociology itself cannot do this, but the issue is very important for the development of the field. This unique human quality means that the world of the spirit-mind plays a decisive role in complex and varied social phenomena and that if we disregard it, we are unable to truly understand the human being, human life, thoughts and emotions, or the way in which societies exist and function. We encourage sociologists and students of sociology to invest a certain

portion of their time and energy in studying and examining this aspect, because it is an important manifestation of sociology's humanist values and also because it is often pushed aside. Clearly, sociology is not going to study this realm of the spirit-mind from the same perspectives as philosophy, theology, or psychiatry; it will have its own distinct angle. At this point we have no clear criteria on which methodologies or specific ways to go about it, but such research is still very meaningful.

The study of the spirit-mind must also avoid a simplistic "reductionism," that is, explaining all spiritual phenomena by attributing them purely to the "non-spiritual" workings of economics, politics, culture, and psychology. Although reductionist "explanations" might seem satisfactory, they often ignore precisely the unique quality of the spirit-mind—that element that differentiates humans from other living beings—and its essential role. To better understand it, sociology should certainly examine it within the context of social mechanisms and functions, but ordinary social factors cannot be used simplistically to replace or explain its actions or workings. Ideally, of course, sociology would create a subfield that researches the spirit-mind, using methodologies based on its academic traditions and perspectives.

16.3 Culture and "Immortality"

The link between man's biological and social natures inevitably leads to his communal, cultural, and historical characteristics. We frequently discuss the cultural and historical aspects, but still lack concrete descriptions based on practical research. In most "ordinary thinking," culture and history are purely social matters, with little relation to nature or biology. However, to the sociologist, they are two different concepts closely linked to man's biological nature.

Here is an example. The instant a human being is born, it has a "biological nature" but no social one. However, in the years that follow, it lives with its mother, and from a single individual it becomes a member of a group, learns to communicate and interact, joins in the life of the "society," and becomes a "social" person. That's why we say this person's life includes both biological and social aspects.

Every member of society has these two natures. When life begins in the mother's womb, the fetus is connected to her in a state of "two in one" that ends with birth when "one becomes two." The inseparable mother-fetus state splits into two separate social individuals. However, biology continues to play an important, often decisive role: the most basic and obvious being the inescapable process of birth, aging, sickness, and death. To say man has a "social nature" in no way denies his "biological one," they are not incompatible or mutually exclusive, but are connected and interwoven. This is one aspect of the oneness between man and nature (*tian*). As a living being, each individual is born and must die in the end, but societies can go on for a long time (of course, not all societies last forever, some have totally vanished), and it is this crucial relation between human "death" and cultural "immortality" that sociology investigates. Why does a society survive for long periods? Because of "culture." Then how does culture do this? Because of the communal nature of soci-

ety, which means that groups can transcend the limitations of the individual. Each person has a finite life span, but people are born and die at different times, so there is an overlap of individual life spans, an overlap of generations. During this overlapping period, people learn from each other; exchange information, feelings, knowledge, and inventions; and pass things along. This transmission goes from one person to another, from one person to many, from one generation to the next, so that the common knowledge of the group, or culture, is preserved in many people's memories and gradually expands into a dynamic, renewing, and widespread "database." In turn, this "database" influences and molds the attitudes and behaviors of the new members of the society. This is how culture is transmitted. The existence of many ways of preserving information (stone carvings, bamboo strips, books, tape recordings, compact discs, etc.) allows people to record and save knowledge for decades even centuries, so that it is handed down. Even if a society does vanish, or a civilization is interrupted, later societies and the living can still learn from the dead; in other words, humans can transcend time and space to continue to learn and share knowledge and experiences. There are many examples of this process. Take Western culture that we often say comes down from the ancient Greek and Roman civilizations. In fact, though ancient Greece and Rome belonged to Europe, many of their cultural achievements were "transferred" through the Arabs and not directly through their own biological heirs. This was because during the Middle Ages, classical culture was interrupted in Europe, but was preserved in the Arab world. In the Renaissance, Europeans "recovered" much ancient Greek and Roman knowledge from the Arabs. The Hebrew language of the Jews is another example. For many centuries, Hebrew had pretty much died out, only a few archaeologists were still able to read the script. However, at the end of the nineteenth century when the Jews decided to reform a country, these scholars taught their family members how to speak it, and then this spreads to their friends, reaching more and more people so that over a number of decades, this "dead" language was revived, and when the state of Israel was founded, it was declared the "national language." There are also many examples from Chinese history. During the Qin dynasty (221–206 BC), many things from the Spring and Autumn (770–476 BC) and Warring States (475–221 BC) Periods were destroyed on orders from the emperor. However, during the following Han dynasty (206 BC-AD 220), the Confucian tradition was revived, thanks to a few surviving Confucian scholars and the remains of old bamboo-strip books, and became the official ideology. At different times, years of war and turmoil in the Central Plains caused many things in the culture to be lost, but they had spread to other regions, such as to south of the Yangtze River, to Korea, and to Japan, where they were preserved. Subsequently, the inhabitants of the Central Plains recovered their heritage from these places and revived many things. The Chinese have also preserved important historical knowledge for other civilizations. For example, Indian culture has traditionally paid little attention to keeping historical records. Today, scholars of Indian history often have to consult ancient Chinese materials, particularly the travel accounts of the Buddhist monk Xuan Zang (602–664) in the Tang dynasty. The histories of the countries around China today have also been recorded in Chinese historical records and preserved for posterity.

Society and culture can make a man "immortal." For example, the Tang dynasty poet Li Bai (701–762) as a biological person died a long time ago, but his poems and poetic style all live on, preserved in the written word. As a man, his life was limited, but his work has become a part of "culture" and has been passed down to us today. Society and culture survive and live on, so those who created them also achieve "immortality." Not only can the culture created by an individual be preserved, it is also transmitted and influences others, inspiring them to create something new. Traditions are the soil from which new culture grows. For over a thousand years, Li Bai's poems have influenced and molded other poets, who have nearly matched him, maybe surpassed him. Culture can "connect" people living in different times and places, it can share life experiences and emotions, and it transcends the limits of individual life and death to grow and flourish.

Cultural transmission is inevitably a historical process, because all culture is an accumulation. There can be no culture without an accumulation over time that transcends life and death and space.

From this perspective of "the individual and the group," culture can be understood as the expression of how the group, or "society," accumulates over time the finite life experiences of its individual members into a common set of social beliefs, thoughts, and knowledge, which is preserved in various ways in the thinking, attitudes, and behaviors of today's living individuals. Culture thus transcends the individual. When a baby is born, this cultural system already exists, and the baby lives within it, accepting what many people over generations have created and accumulated. This confers on culture its historical nature that stretches over time and space and outlives the individual person. That's why to grasp culture's true meaning, we must always examine it within its historical context. This historical essence must be understood in its widest sense, because it is not just specific information or skills that are accumulated and passed on, but deeper, more abstract dimensions too, such as epistemologies, ways of thinking, philosophies of life, etc. Culture is also transmitted in the form of social mechanisms and structures. For instance, the basic social structures of husband and wife, of mother and father, and of community are all part of culture and have been taught and handed down to us by our forebears. This long process has been full of changes and innovations, but always on the basis of continuation. That's why we cannot ignore history when we study society and consider how to reform it. No social structure is ever built out of thin air, it always has roots in a former society, which it inherits and continues in certain aspects and then builds something new based on it. Take the United States, for example, this "man-made" country's social structures did not appear out of the blue when the nation was first established, they were transplanted from Europe. The basic structures of the American society were built by the dominant white European immigrants (rebels, exiles, gold diggers, dreamers) whose cultural backgrounds, ways of thinking, philosophy of life, knowledge, and skills were all shaped by European social systems. In the early days of the colonies, these people unavoidably and inevitably had to rely on European cultural traditions. They might have been "nonmainstream" and even opposed to the mainstream in Europe at that time, but they were still a European "nonmainstream," a branch of a specific civilization.

Their social structures were not built out of nothing, but were an extension and variation of European culture. In the same way, though our current Chinese society has gone through revolutions to destroy the old and introduce the new, nonetheless not all has been rebuilt from scratch since 1949. Our social structures are a continuation of changes that have taken place over thousands of years, and they are closely linked with the past. When the PRC was established, millions of people continued to follow cultural sensibilities, values, ways of thinking, and beliefs passed down through history. No one can suddenly "delete" or "wipe out" the old ways within a society to turn it into a blank space and fill it with something entirely new. We describe our Chinese revolution as "turning the world upside down" and "starting all over again," but in fact, it follows the internal logic of Chinese social transformation and represents a phase in the continuous evolution of Chinese civilization. Today, 50 years later, our society is still closely linked to the past; the historical, cultural accumulation continues in every realm, perpetual and unbroken.

16.4 "Understanding Without Words" (*zhi neng yihui*)

There are still many areas in basic "social relationships" that await our study. Sociology is still unable to explain certain aspects of human "communication," for example, that part that "goes without saying," which is "beyond words" and yet is so very important. Much interpersonal understanding is not expressed through language or in a rational way, instead it comes from "just knowing," and it is the most subtle, crucial kind of connection. A classic example is the way intimate friends, old acquaintances, or members of the same cultural subgroup just seem to understand and relate to each other without saying anything, sometimes even better than with speech. Within very intimate relations, such as between a mother and child, there is also this instinctive understanding, especially if the child is very young and cannot express itself with language, yet the mother is still able to "know" what the child is feeling. This quality is extremely important, sometimes even decisive, and so naturally should be a basic topic for sociological study.

Within social groups and organizations and in different circles, people use and rely on these "implicit understandings" to communicate, regulate, and adjust their relations. Such unspoken understandings are constantly being renegotiated. In fact, whenever more than two people interact for any length of time, they will come to shared understandings that are then continuously, spontaneously, and repeatedly revised and renewed. Practically any group under any circumstances will develop a number of temporary or permanent "unspoken rules": a group of students sharing a dormitory will, without plan or design, rapidly develop its own "language"; colleagues at a meeting will become part of an "in-group" which will disappear once they separate; a short conversation between two people is actually a dynamic, mutual "sounding out" to come to some kind of tacit understanding. It is no exaggeration to say that a society, a culture, or a civilization is built more on these social interactions based on "unspoken understandings" than on verbal public com-

munication, written down in black and white or meticulously spelled out. Research into this is still very weak. Sociologists and anthropologists do perform related research, but have not launched a concerted exploration; hence, there have been no breakthroughs. Many things are still at the descriptive stage. Chinese culture has traditionally had a preference for and has excelled in this kind of "tacit understanding" in social relationships. Perhaps Chinese sociology can produce something really exceptional in this area. It is obvious that without any breakthrough here, sociology will be sorely lacking, whether as an applied discipline or as one that cultivates human refinement.

Looking into this "nonverbal" aspect of human interactions is not some abstract, theoretical topic of conversation for cultural salons or the studies and ivory towers of academia. It involves many issues needing urgent solutions. Take the situation in China, for example. Over the last 20-odd years, economic and social development has progressed by leaps and bounds, resulting in huge regional differences. On the one hand, there are the Pearl River and Yangtze River deltas where there has been fast and constructive growth and where many places are already approaching the levels of developed countries, fulfilling the modernization dream for which several generations of Chinese have struggled. On the other hand, there are many places that lag far behind, where deeper social structures are stagnating at levels of 20–30 years ago and where no basic social change has occurred. Our sociologists tend to look into the situation purely from the social perspective, that is, the organization, the ideology, the finances and technology, the geographical location, etc., and they note that even though backward areas have similar systems, laws, regulations, and official ideology to the advanced regions and are governed by the same basic policies with many superficial similarities, the developmental results have still been extremely different. Thanks to in-depth "participant observation," we have now discovered that the subtle, daily human interactions, the ways of communicating, and the attitudes and related customs, habits, and values of the local inhabitants are actually very different from those of the advanced regions. Most of these differences are precisely in those "nonverbal, tacit" areas. Frequently, they are the real reason for the uneven economic and social progress. That is why to effectively speed up the development of backward places, like the Western Regions or the state-owned enterprises of the Northeast, there must be ways of dealing with the "tacit" dimensions. Focusing purely on public verbal pronouncements, superficial "systems," "laws," and "rules" will not truly solve the problems.

All the "unspoken" and "tacit" things in everyday life are the most common, ordinary, and unexciting parts of a culture, yet they are its most fundamental, consistent, profound, and core aspects. They cover everything and pervade every detail of life so that people have no need to explain anything to each other. Seen from the angle of how a society functions, these cultural elements permeate every aspect of daily existence, and though seemingly small and trivial, they represent a vigorous and dynamic cultural force that creates an invisible, pervasive web covering every minute detail and controlling each person's existence at all times. They are far stronger and more effective than many seemingly powerful loud forces and often play a decisive role in a society. When we go to local communities, all the things that we "outsiders" cannot

see, describe, feel, measure, or control are likely to be precisely those deeply hidden underlying currents that make our work so difficult and of course should even more be the focus of our research. When trying to discover the reasons for regional developmental differences, these things that are "hidden in plain sight" or "too familiar to notice" might just be the key to solving the economic puzzles.

The importance of these hidden dimensions is not restricted to regional development studies alone; they also play a role in many other practical areas, such as attracting foreign investment, enterprise reform, grassroots organization, ethnic relations, urban culture, and community building. China has already accumulated a great deal of practical experience and research, which are all bases for further investigation. If scholars could build on these and step up their studies, they might be able to make some real theoretical and practical breakthroughs.

A deeper look into "understanding without words" is in fact an examination of "social relations," one of the most basic and central concepts of sociology. Academic research does not mean always pursuing the most novel or cutting-edge concepts. In fact, the most ordinary and common ones actually need the most sustained discussion and can often serve as the best entry points into new academic thinking and further growth.

"Social relations" have been discussed and described by many people ad nauseam precisely because they are the most common concept in sociology, but that does not mean they do not contain many possibilities for further investigation and development.

16.5 "The Unmentioned Self"

Aside from the "tacit" aspect, "social relations" can also be approached from the "two ends" of an interaction, that is, from the "persons" involved. Of course, here, I am not proposing that we rehash the results of sociology by examining the "person" from the perspective of an observer. Instead, I am suggesting that we try to understand the "person" from the subjective angle of the "I."

Here we note an important phenomenon: this single "I" or "self" is in fact made up of multiple "selves." There is the biological self, the social self, the cultural self, the external self, the hidden self, the unmentioned self, etc., however not in the Freudian psychological sense of "selves" but in the sociological sense. Theoretically speaking, the most ordinary self is the biological one, but nobody actually has any sense of it, since it only occurs in its purest form at the time of birth, and no baby then has any sense or knowledge of it. Usually, a person will come closest to a pure sense of biological self when placed under extreme conditions where all culturally conditioned feelings are lost and life has returned to a basic instinctive state. This could be times of great fear and instinctive flight, extreme pain when other sensations are lost, extreme excitement approaching ecstasy, etc. However, even then it is very difficult for people who have lived within a culture for a long time to completely disregard their background and become a purely biological self. Other situations can be when normal consciousness is absent, leaving only instinctive reflexes, such as when asleep

or drunk, yet even then these are not pure biological states, because dreams in sleep are also "cultural," and the dream self is not the same as the waking self; the drunken self is also influenced by a special "drunken culture" which is distinct from the regular one. Another problem in these circumstances is that we are unable to "experience" ourselves in a normal way.

Among these multiple "selves," there are some that are visible and can be openly described, but these are in the minority. In fact, each person has many more selves that are hidden in the heart and rarely mentioned, making up a private self that is apart from the public one. Often we are not even aware of this "indefinable self" or that in fact it controls our life, work, speech, behavior, and social exchanges. This is where my previous comments on "tacit understandings" come into play, because much of it is often related to this "indefinable self." For example, reading classical poetry can conjure up deep feelings of appreciation as we reach across the centuries to enjoy beauty with the ancients. These emotions are often hard to describe, yet for someone with this poetic sensibility, they can be "understood without words." So which is the "self" that feels this resonance? It does not seem to be the one who eats and sleeps, or who is described so clearly in a work-application resume, or that so-and-so with a face, character, skills, and hobbies who interacts with colleagues, friends, or neighbors. The self who communicates "tacitly" is not the clear, concrete describable one. This self can be defined through different social interactions, yet this becomes very hard when we cannot pin down these "tacit" interactions. The interesting thing is that this hidden self that is able to relate "tacitly" is itself something that can only be understood "tacitly."

Sometimes, we can "understand" others "without words," but not ourselves. We often are not really aware of why or how we have dealt with these "tacit" things, because we have been following habits in a very natural way. It's hard to explain our actions, and we often do not admit the reasons when others point them out.

A clarification is needed here. The "indefinable self" is not the same thing as the "unrevealed self." When we reflect upon ourselves, we see and know ourselves in a certain way that may seem similar to the "indefinable self," and others may even consider them identical since they are all things we do not wish to reveal. However, we realize they are totally different. The "self" that we know from reflection can be clearly described and seen, but we have deliberately hidden it from others, because we do not want them to know about it. This "self" is a known entity and can be explained, and it is also much more straightforward than the "indefinable self." Of course, this "unrevealed self" can also be expressed through "tacit understanding," but then the question arises: who is expressing, who is the subject? And back we come to the self that "understands without words."

The human behavior is governed by these multiple selves. It is possible to be aware of the "indefinable self," and many people can do this through "intuition," which is hard to prove or explain and often doubted or rejected. However, certain things similar to intuition cannot be completely denied. Take poetry again, which is able through "meanings beyond words" to express this "self." Poets of all ages and nations seem to be able to directly give voice to such emotions. When we read poetry and feel the "meaning beyond the words," we are actually resonating with the "indefinable self" of the poet.

The other arts, such as painting and music, also express this "self." Research from this perspective of the "tacit" meaning conveyed by the "indefinable self" of a subject in an interaction is thus a new challenge for sociology. Art, literature, film, etc., are merely using and expressing this phenomenon, not researching or examining it theoretically. However, sociology, as one of the social sciences based on logical causal and system analyses, has the responsibility and the means to carry out such studies. Sociology should achieve a breakthrough here, whether as a usable "tool" or as humanistic education. This would be a milestone in its development and represent another step forward in human knowledge.

Among all the different "selves," there is one that deserves more attention, and that is the "ignored self" or "denied self." The ancients often talked about being "selfless (*wang wo*)" and "eliminating the personal (*qu si*)," which amounts to a negation of the self. What does this imply, and what exactly do these words mean? Do they mean one's life, or desires, or identity, or wealth? What's left if the "self" is removed? If the "self" is negated, then who is the subject of this action? Based on modern concepts, people today will ask all sorts of questions. "Ignoring the self" or "denying the self" is in fact a very contradictory condition, which reflects a deep tension within Chinese cultural values. Yet this is not some imaginary state of mind of characters in moral fables, but a description of many flesh-and-blood, historical people whose deeds have been recorded down the centuries. From time immemorial, there have been many "righteous ones" (*ren ren zhi shi*) who achieved this state of mind in pursuit of their ideals and other "superior ones" (*gao ren*) who reached these heights through self-cultivation; and of course there were the "strange ones" (*qi ren*) who entered into this state because of an obsession or complete immersion into something. No matter what, being "selfless" and "eliminating the personal" were considered very high levels of consciousness in the classical value system, attainable only through a great deal of moral self-cultivation. In fact, one does not have to go back into antiquity to see this at work: just a couple of decades ago, the mainstream Chinese society raised this value to unbelievable heights, labeling "personal" as the biggest evil, "the self" became a derogatory term, and the whole of society was pervaded by an extreme version of total "selflessness" and "elimination of the personal." This was not so long ago, and we all lived through it. That such extreme emotions could have prevailed in the twentieth century which shows the immense force of the "denied self" in Chinese culture. The "unmentioned self" and the "indefinable self," together with this "denied self," should all be topics for in-depth sociological research.

16.6 Empathy (*jiang xin bi xin*)

In the traditional Chinese way of thinking, the cognitive framework for "person," "society," and "history" does not follow the Western dichotomy of "subjective" and "objective," nor does it completely follow Mr. Nakane Chie's "vertical directionality" outline for Japanese culture. The Chinese worldview is more of an "inner" and

"outer" schema: all things move either "from inner to outer" or "from surface to core," in a series of shrinking or expanding layers of "differential modes of association." Preoccupation with the "self" in traditional thought will naturally proceed deeper "inward" toward the center, toward the concept of heart-and-mind (*xin*).

Perhaps it was because the ancients lacked knowledge of physiology that they mistakenly designated "the heart" as the source of all thought. As a result, the character *xin*, which originally meant the physical organ of the heart, became associated with both reasoning and desires and became the center of a vast, complex thought system. Though biologically mistaken, this does not preclude the immense cultural value of such a system, since the concept of heart-and-mind (regardless of whether or not "the heart" is really the source of reasoning) has long since become abstract and separate from the actual physical organ. It is no longer a physiological term (today one could call it "the brain"), having risen to the level of a philosophy of life, imbued with rich philosophical content.

In classical thinking, heart-and-mind was a key concept in the practice of self-cultivation and reflection. It broadly included reasoning, consciousness, attitudes, emotions, desires, and beliefs. Of particular note here is the important tendency or implicit sense of "subjectivity," because people very naturally have a feeling of "connection" when they talk about the heart-and-mind. Even discussing the heart-and-mind of others is always done with a sense of affinity, of "standing in the other's shoes," as if speaking from the perspective of a "subject" (rather like the "subjective shot" in film), rather than the "objective" one of an observer. Naturally this habit of expression leads to the whole concept of "empathy." The subtle emotional interplay surrounding heart-and-mind, especially when expressed through the semantics and grammar of the Chinese language which does not have clear-cut nominative or accusative cases, also demonstrates the distinctive approaches of ancient Chinese thought. This is all outside our current regular scientific positivist methodology and a new area worth studying.

The concept of heart-and-mind with its unique associated ways of thinking makes it an extremely important dimension within social interactions, as the following common expressions show: *xin xin xiangyin* (kindred spirits), *xin you lingxi* (understand without words), and *zhiren zhimian bu zhixin* (know the face but not the heart). Describing interpersonal relations according to heart-and-mind means focusing not on the features or kind of relationship per se, but more on the "attitude" of the parties involved and what the unspoken words convey. Regardless of what kind of relationship it is, the most important and deciding factor is the "attitude" of the people involved: is there trust or deception? Is there openness or secrecy? Is there honesty or deviousness? Is there seriousness or flippancy? The belief that interpersonal relations are based on "attitude" is the crystallization of centuries of social practice, not the result of abstract theorizing. It contains great innate value and is worthy of our attention and research. It also has deep epistemological significance. For our ancestors, "to know without being told" (*xin ling shen hui*) was the most profound and genuine way of knowing, since it drew upon heart-and-mind and spirit (*shen*), very different from our current positivist tradition with its criteria of "measurable," "conceptual," "logical," "causal," and

"tested hypothesis." This epistemology does not only apply to the rhetoric of literature but is actually practiced in daily life and has underpinned Chinese civilization and culture for thousands of years down to this very day. Thus, it must not only possess excellent qualities but also powerful reasons for existing.

Another feature of "heart-and-mind" is a strong ethical and moral connotation. The abstract, epistemological *xin* is based on the "heart," the most important organ for life, but also quite naturally includes other valuable and vital qualities of "being upright" (*zuoren*) and of "proper conduct (*weiren*)." When a person behaves according to this concept, there is already the assumption of moving from "the inner to the outer," from "me" to "others" in an ethical "differential mode of association" of interaction between the hypothetical "self" and the external world. As these relational circles move outward from the heart-and-mind, they should include, in modern terms, sincerity, coexistence, adjustment, harmony, moderation, tolerance, concern for others, and a constructive attitude (*cheng, zheng, ren, ai, shu*). These conform to the basic ethical principles of social interaction of "oneness between Nature and Man" (*tian ren he yi*), of "putting oneself in another's position" (*tui ji ji ren*), and of "not doing to others what you would not wish done to yourself (*ji suo bu yu, wu shi yu ren*)." The subjectivity and ethical nature of heart-and-mind act both as an encouragement and as a brake on the "self" (the cognitive subject). This concept is quite different from what much of current research emphasizes today, that is, a detached, "neutral," and "objective" attitude toward right and wrong. Instead, it frankly admits that "value judgments" are inevitable, and it does not try to avoid or hide a value preference or moral responsibility. It openly "ethicizes" the relationship between the self and the external world and asserts that the process of understanding the latter is one of "self-cultivation" in order to "improve society" (*jingshi jimin*) and not to take the "purely objective," "neutral" stance of an "observer." Thus, each person's view of the world starts from his heart-and-mind and moves outward in an ethical ordering of "integrity, sincerity, and self-cultivation (*xiu*), family unity (*qi*), national order (*zhi*), and peace for all (*ping*)."

Today's sociology should explore this concept of heart-and-mind that our ancestors have extolled for millennia. It cannot be just simply deconstructed to mean "thought" or "intelligence" in the current senses. Lu Xiangshan[1] said, "The universe is my *xin*, my *xin* is the universe." What does this mean? What kind of insights can this offer our field today? At this point, Chinese sociology has not paid much attention to this concept, yet without studying it there is no true understanding of Chinese society. As a core concept in how the ancients understood the "self" and human relations, heart-and-mind has permeated every corner of our culture and is the word with the highest daily usage. It is an important part of our tradition, passed down through generations, making it the basis for the thinking and judgment of millions, whose attitudes and behavior have been and are guided and molded by it.

As a point of reference, we must note that the concept of *xin* is not unique to Chinese culture. We already know that others have also placed "the heart" (the organ) at the

[1] 1139–1193, a major educator and philosopher, founder of Xin Xue or School of the Universal Mind

center of human consciousness, thereby conferring an abstract meaning on it and giving it a central position in the "person" and "society" schema. For example, in Western culture, the term "heart" also originally designated the physical organ, but its extended meaning has wider connotations, so that in ordinary speech, "heart" has come to mean "sincerity," "the true me," "important memories," etc. It continues to be a key term used to describe the "self" and "social interactions." In many situations, this meaning of "heart" is similar to the Chinese one.

16.7 Methodology and Ancient Culture

Sociology, like other sciences, cannot avoid the issues of methodology and innovation as it explores and investigates new areas of study. The dominant method in mainstream sociology today is the positivist "scientific" method. Of course in its broadest sense, science should incorporate all systems of knowledge and thought, but currently, the sociological "scientific" method means proposing hypotheses, verifying them, and using statistics, pretty much in the same way as in the natural sciences and mathematics. These basic methods are already very mature and will continue to be used in sociology for a long time to come. However, as we begin to look into new issues and areas, we will need to revisit these former methodologies and tools. When we examine concepts like the "self" or heart-and-mind, can the old positivist, hypothesis + verification model work anymore? How will it work? We will need to experiment and explore and perhaps draw on new perspectives and research methods. In this process, we should keep an open mind and look to the wisdom of all human cultures, like those of India, Islam, Hebrew, Christian Orthodox, Native American, and Africa. They have all reached sophisticated levels of wisdom accumulated over the long history of mankind. We must study and learn from them. On the surface, these cultures today seem to be "weak" but the value of culture and wisdom cannot be gauged simply by economic or military criteria. Within mankind's many cultures lies much unique, brilliant, and ageless wisdom that we must learn to admire, understand, and absorb, what I call "appreciating the best of others, appreciating everyone's best together." For centuries, Chinese culture has been like a vast river accepting all that flows into it. When we absorb outside influences, we should not limit ourselves to one culture or one achievement. For example, when we study the constructs of "spirit," "self," and "heart-and-mind," we should take serious note of the many religious traditions of devotion, introspection, repentance, and meditation. Buddhism has explored intuition, human nature, abstinence, concentration, and wisdom for 2,000 years. Chinese Neo-Confucianism drew heavily upon this, and it was also the basis for the Buddhist Chan sect, as well as other native Chinese schools of thought. Much of this is already very sophisticated and profound and could provide us with good directions for new areas of sociological study.

Knowledge of the many ancient Chinese schools of thought including Confucianism and Taoism are absolutely essential to understanding the Chinese

society. The philosophy of Neo-Confucianism of the Song (960–1279) and Ming (1368–1644) dynasties is of particular importance. Considered to be one of the most outstanding flowerings of Chinese culture, it is a priceless key for exploring the spirit, psychology, and behavior of the Chinese people. One of the most important features of the evolution of Chinese traditional thought is its practical nature. The Neo-Confucian thought did not emerge from scholarly conceptualizations or pure theoretical conjecture. All its concepts and inner logic were intimately bound up with the essential elements of human interaction within Chinese social reality—position, status, and power. It brought together the experience of the politics, society, and culture of the times, and it proposed a set of guiding principles. It was extremely practical. Put simply, Neo-Confucianism directly addressed the issues of how the "person" should interact with others and how the "person" should be treated, governed, and molded. These dimensions directly determine what today's sociologists call the "mechanisms" and "structures" of society that make it function. By reexamining the achievements of our forebears from a higher perspective, we should gain many new insights into our current research and be able to extend Chinese sociology into fruitful new areas.

Neo-Confucianism is extremely valuable for a deeper understanding of the wisdom/intuition (*xinzhi*) of the Chinese. We definitely need more sorting and analysis, because its forms of expression, lines of reasoning, and parameters are very different from today's sociology. That's why we need a process of "interpretation" and "translation" or what is called "hermeneutics." To do this, one has to seriously study it to grasp all its connotations, and in the process new concepts will be created. As we probe these traditional ideas, we must combine them with modern sociological ones so we can develop something that is both rooted in our tradition and yet not limited by it, something new that has broad general significance for us today. In fact, the methodology of modern sociology is partly the reason why, up until now, Chinese sociology has not paid more attention to the millennium-old concepts of heart-and-mind (*xin*), spirit (*shen*), and nature (*xing*), for the simple reason that these constructs do not lend themselves to modern mainstream research methods, since they are difficult to understand, define, and measure. Here, the positivist approach is hard to apply in depth and will also probably encounter many basic problems. For instance, a precondition of the scientific method is to have something that can be observed and measured, with an empirical foundation and an objective existence. The subject of research must first be "objectified," yet this is very hard to do for concepts like heart-and-mind (*xin*). Expressed another way, the methods of modern sociology are not able to "communicate" across time and history with the ancients. Our current sociology has still not found a way to communicate with the Neo-Confucians.

Opening up new realms of research often requires new methodologies and means, and there is always the possibility of adopting other tools and ways of thinking. Neo-Confucian methodology could be an addition and assistance to sociological research. This tradition emphasizes the role of self-cultivation, of "putting oneself in the other's position"(*tui ji ji ren*), and of "investigating natural order to acquire knowledge" (*gewu zhi zhi*), all quite different from the methods of Western

positivism and scientism. Neo-Confucianism relied on deep insight and intuition to directly gain a kind of understanding. Our forebears practiced this for millennia, but nowadays, it is completely out of touch with our modern ways of thinking and is almost lost. Most of us, including most scholars, have no inkling what this means. However, we cannot simply dismiss such ideas as wrong, backward, or useless. After all, they have not only existed for a very long time, but, more importantly, have evolved into a whole system of reasoning and belief that penetrated the consciousness of many people and resolved many issues that our present ways of thinking have failed to do. For example, given the technology of those ancient times, how did this system help to sustain the unity and stability of such a huge country and population, probably the largest, most complex political and economic entity in the world for much of that period? The intelligentsia and bureaucracy of the time were all "armed" with this epistemology and way of thinking, making it possible to govern a complex society in a way that used relatively few human and material resources.

Much of Neo-Confucian thinking had roots in natural human experience and so conformed to the specific workings of Chinese agrarian society. Beginning as cultural grassroots praxis, it was refined and elevated to the height of "virtue of the sages," which enabled it to link complex hierarchical social structures from top to bottom. It had a naturally close connection to the realities of Chinese social practice.

Perhaps some of these traditional methods could be more closely examined today as one of the "cutting-edge" ideas of modern sociology. On the one hand, we would truly gain insights into the ancients' epistemology and grasp its essence; on the other, by accepting all trends of thought, we would not be swayed by fashion or fads, but would focus on the things of value to the development of Chinese sociology and use our own needs as criteria for evaluating and absorbing them. For example, in Western sociology's field studies, a new method of intersubjectivity has emerged, based on hermeneutics (from theology), on Max Weber's "comprehension," and on phenomenology. This is an investigative method that takes into account the subjective consciousness of both the researcher and the object of research and is different from regular positivist methods. Western social anthropologists have early on already displayed some of this in their field notes. This attitude seems similar to our own ideas of "empathy" (*jiang xin bi xin*) and "kindred spirits" (*xin xin xiangyin*). We should look into it all more deeply.

16.8 Epilogue

The relationship between "Man" and "nature," "person" and "person," "self" and "self," and "heart-and-mind" and "heart-and-mind" are still hard to study directly, yet they are often key to a true understanding of Chinese society. They also contain within them the values to build a better, quality modern society. Research in sociology should aspire to this goal; otherwise, it is not a mature "science." If we could

put our mind to carefully taking stock of our priceless heritage and achieve a breakthrough, we would really be pushing sociology to new heights.

We have a hard task ahead of getting a handle on all these concepts that are enmeshed with culture and history and not "countable" on a computer. This is a process in which we will revisit our own history and is the practical expression of "cultural self-reflection" and "cultural self-awareness." Mr. Liang Shuming very early on noted that, in contrast to Western culture, many traditions in Chinese civilization seem to display a straightforward and early maturation. Chinese painting, for instance, very early on passed through the stage of realism and copying from life and entered the realm of calligraphy and a high level of freestyle, abstract expression. By contrast, Western painting has gone through one long maturation stage after another before finally reaching the abstract. The strengths of each cultural tradition can and should be complementary. Chinese civilization may indeed have developed poorly in some areas, resulting in technological weaknesses that caused its defeat in the struggle with the West. However, its capacity for experience-based intuitive foresight and vision enabled it very early on to realize and relate to things that others did not. On the macro level of human cultural history and seen from a world perspective, there are many issues today that, after setbacks, mistakes, conflicts, and destruction, have nevertheless compelled us to refer back to what the sages noted, pondered, and taught about a long, long time ago. If sociology can gain a deeper understanding of this gigantic historical cycle of rise and fall, then we will be able to feel the pulse of many social phenomena and problems and, in the face of dramatic social changes, we will "understand without being told" the "meanings behind the words" of our times.

October 2003

Chapter 17
Chinese Culture and Social Anthropology in the New Century—A Conversation Between Fei Xiaotong and Li Yiyuan

Fei: This past spring, a new National People's Congress began a new term, and I retired from my official post. However, I have not retired from work yet. You too have now reached retirement age, so we are in the same situation. I think I have a couple of more years to live, and so as old friends, I hope we can use this meeting to discuss what we could do in the future.

A few days ago during the seminar at Peking University, I mentioned what I have been experiencing over the past few years. Before the age of 85, I was very busy and did not feel old at all; I truly did not feel age was an issue. Then I passed 85 and I began to feel my years. Everything became more difficult, and my energy level decreased. I could no longer do what I wanted, I couldn't walk the distances anymore, writing became harder, and I had to take frequent breaks. I now see more clearly the difference between the biological person and the social and cultural one. The former will certainly pass away, that's a natural law, the "will of heaven," and so we will see how much longer I have.

During our lifetime as a member of society, the influences we have in our interaction with others are actually social and cultural, not personal. They will outlive our individual life spans. People die, but this human world in which we live will carry on, and its role too is greater than any individual's. A person at most can live a 100 years, and during this time, he has inherited the cultural achievements of the past and contributed something of his own. This could be good, could be bad, but it cannot be erased or changed. At this point in my life, I look back and wonder what I am leaving for posterity. It's interesting how this frame of mind has only appeared in my old age; it certainly never occurred to me when I was young, and how could it! So here I am at 88, and I am thinking about these things. Today I would like to tell you about my plans and hear what you think I could still contribute. This will

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affect my life over the next few years. I have done some traveling in the past years and have felt quite well. My doctors tell me there is nothing much wrong with me, and so, in this last period of my life, I would like to do something that both others and myself find interesting and useful. That's why I have invited you here today to talk things over.

Li: I am really happy to meet with you today. You are very gracious to say it's to discuss things with me, but really it's a chance for me to ask for your valuable input. I retired last July and want to learn how you, even though you no longer hold an official position, continue to be so active in academia and research. Tsinghua University (in Hsinchu, Taiwan) has given me an honorary position with some research funding. The Academia Sinica (Taipei) has also confirmed a research project on the cultivation of *qi*, called "Culture, *Qi* and Traditional Medicine." One of the most basic differences between Western and Chinese cultures is how they gather knowledge about the objective world. Chinese culture relies on the innate experiences of both body and spirit to know the outside world. The project will extend over several years and hopes to explain the origins of this traditional Chinese cognitive process. Today is a wonderful opportunity for me to ask for your input before I start this research.

You are very kind to seek my ideas about your plans for the future. I would first of all like to say that you have already accomplished far, far more than most people. Age might be creeping up on you, but you continue to ponder many issues and develop your ideas, which are important for the whole of academia. Just last night, I was thinking about how your contributions to anthropology and sociology range not only from the theoretical but also to the very practical. Most scholars find this extremely difficult. You have aspired to "benefit the people" and have employed research as a tool, proposing many new practical areas of study, so that field investigations have not only produced academic theories but also practical benefits for all.

Most researchers are able to think up something theoretical to investigate, but it does not necessarily have any practical use. I have discussed this in one of my recent papers, in which I argued that a good scholar should not only produce pure theory but, even more importantly, something useful. You began by studying villages, then moved on to towns, and then to the strategic configuration of whole regions. This has had practical implications for boosting the national forces of production and has also pioneered important new methodologies in anthropology and sociology. In the past, most anthropological research focused on one small village and remained at that level. You, however, have succeeded in stepping out of the village into towns and then into regions. This is an extremely important achievement in applying anthropology to fulfill local needs. "Benefiting the people" is a most admirable ambition. It is uncommon for a scholar to have this level of awareness and then to actually contribute something truly useful.

Yesterday, I read the preface of your new book. In it you talk about "Educating for the 21st Century" (Issue 1, Chapter I of this volume–Ed.). This is indeed extremely important. You analyze the future of mankind and propose that not only should "each appreciate its own best" but also "appreciate the best of others" too.

As we prepare to enter the twenty-first century, this is probably the most important perspective of all. The world is already a global village, and tolerating diversity as we interact should constitute a basic consensus. Samuel Huntington in his *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* is convinced that Western, Asian, and Islamic civilizations will end up in conflict. Avoiding this is of primary importance. Anthropologists seem a bit more positive, arguing not only for avoiding the clash but also for tolerating others and going one step further to suggest appreciating others. Your views are all an expression of this more positive and constructive attitude.

From reading your book, I summarize two main themes: one is practical, that is, how to promote development of China's economy and society so that it becomes a strong and prosperous nation; the other is theoretical, that is, how mankind can coexist, collaborate, and progress toward a common harmony. You have already spent a great deal of time thinking about these themes and written many substantive articles, but from a longer historical perspective, the issues have only just been laid out. You still have another dozen years before you reach 100, so you have both the time and energy to continue elaborating on them. During this period, new related social issues will appear and will stimulate your thinking further. You write and analyze so very vividly and can keep deepening and adding to your ideas to leave a richer legacy for posterity. I have a bookcase where I keep all your works, which have been fully published in Taiwan. Just a couple of days ago, I looked over them again and feel that these two themes are the most salient. I hope that your thinking on them can be further developed.

Fei: The book I gave you yesterday is entitled *Seeking Knowledge from Reality*.[1] This encapsulates my attitude toward science. Everything must start from reality. *Shi* means "reality" or the practice of people increasing production and raising their standard of living. Through *shi* one achieves *zhi* (knowledge), which should then be channeled back to the people. Sustenance drawn from a place should then be returned to it. We Chinese often talk about "being grateful and giving back," and for me that means benefiting the people. I once wrote an article where I discussed the topic of "the scales of life." Mr. Wu Zelin[2] first proposed this, that is, what we contribute to society and what we receive in return are the two ends of the scales. Take my own case, for example. I was pretty well educated, though this was not easy since my father was an ordinary civil servant and our whole family lived off his salary. My mother was very frugal, because she wanted all her children to be educated. After my mother died, my elder sister supported me through school. From Tsinghua University, I went abroad to study on the Boxer Indemnity Scholarship,[3] paid with the sweat and blood of the Chinese people. This was the investment society put into

[1] In Chinese, *Congshi qiuzhilu* (《从实求知录》), Beijing: Peking University Press, 1998.

[2] 1898–1990, educator and specialist in ethnic studies, did frequent fieldwork in the minority areas of southwest China, and advocated establishing a museum of ethnic minority peoples.

[3] A scholarship program funded by Boxer Rebellion indemnity money paid to the United States that provided for Chinese students to study in the United States.

me, and it was quite considerable, so I have to think about what I produce in return. I don't think it has been enough, and I am not trying to be modest.

Recently, I have been thinking about writing something on how I studied sociology with Robert Park.[4] I first studied under him in university, but I didn't really grasp it all, so now I feel I must review things. I have dug out all the teaching materials from that time, including Park's books, and I still find there are places that elude me, and which I have to think about more carefully. This too is seeking knowledge from reality. After decades of academic practice, it is useful to go back and look over the basic training one received in the beginning and to get a better appreciation of how empirical knowledge connects with book learning and how book learning can in turn encourage the learner to consciously engage in practice.

Where education is concerned, our generation did not do too badly; the generation after us was worse off, because the basics were weak. It's interesting to go back over the past. My father was in the last batch to take the imperial examinations,[5] which were eliminated after him. As part of the reforms, a number of those who had done well were then sent abroad, and that's why my father went to Japan where he studied pedagogy. After returning to China, he set up a middle school. Later he went to Nantong when Zhang Jian[6] invited him there to teach. That's where the "*tong*" in my name comes from. My mother set up the first kindergarten in the county town and I was educated there, not under traditional private tutors. I never studied the classics and never even read *The Three-character Classic* (*San zi jing*) or *One Hundred Surnames* (*Baijia xing*). The teaching of Mencius "men at their birth are naturally good" is very philosophical but I never learned it. My earliest schoolbooks were published by the Commercial Press, and I started with the characters for "person, hand, foot, knife, and ruler." This was all new then. My father lived through the cultural changes of the era and supported the new learning, so none of his children had any of the old-style education. That's why I am missing this part of traditional Chinese culture. Recently, I have been reading the biographies of Gu Jiegang, Fu Sinian, and Qian Mu who were all educated in the traditional way. They came from the generation before me, and one big difference between us is that I am sorely lacking in knowledge of Chinese culture.

Li: Well, by my generation, there was nothing left at all; it's all been the new learning.

Fei: This has been a huge disadvantage for me when studying Chinese culture, because I have difficulty really grasping its essence. After reading Chen Yinque, the words "sense of belonging" come to mind. A man of letters seeks a place to find

[4] 1864–1944, prominent American sociologist, founder of the Chicago School. Park focused on urban society and race relations in the United States and developed the method of participant observation later used extensively in anthropology and sociology. He taught at Beijing University for a short time where Fei studied with him.

[5] The civil service examination system in Imperial China to select candidates for the state bureaucracy.

[6] 1853–1926, educator, businessman, and politician. He was one of the first to set up cotton-textile factories in China, established a technical school, and studied how to improve cotton varieties and cultivation techniques.

peace; this is a sense of belonging. From my earliest childhood, my sense of belonging has been rooted in the new education, not the old. Chen Yinque finds his in previous eras. His *Supplementary Biography of Liu Rushi* is just beautiful, and he is able to fully understand the intellectuals of the transition period between the Ming (1368–1644) and Qing (1644–1911) dynasties. There is no doubt that my background in Chinese culture is far less than that of the generation before me, but on the other hand, this was not my personal choice; it was the inevitable result of historical change. Each generation faces its own problems, and each has its strengths. Our generation's strength is that we came in contact with Western things.

Li: You started from a Western framework but are now looking back to your own culture.

Fei: R. D. Arkush wrote a biography of me,[7] from the perspective of a Western scholar. What he is missing is my Chinese cultural background. But then my background is not the same as Gu Jiegang's or Qian Mu's….

Li: They were totally products of the ancient broader tradition absorbed from the classics; you, on the other hand, have absorbed Chinese culture from the actual lives of ordinary people. That is quite different. They had probably not systematically observed or experienced social life, whereas you have frequently encountered all the vivid realities, pondered them, identified issues, and proposed ideas. They were not able to do that.

Fei: I have consciously placed myself in the shoes of the farmers. But in fact, this does not mean I completely identify with their mentality. After all, I am not a peasant but an intellectual within the larger culture. I come from the gentry class which has formed my social attributes, while my cultural ones are those of an intellectual formed and nurtured by the new learning. My first university was the missionary college of Dongwu, which laid a Western cultural foundation. Later I went to Britain and came into closer contact with the West. After I came back, I deliberately immersed myself in Chinese rural society and in that of the minority ethnic peoples. I have a superficial understanding of both the old, traditional larger culture and the smaller peasant one. As a result, I have always felt I did not know enough of either to carry out my research. This has been the experience of my life, yet it was not my choice; it was determined by history. It's really quite interesting to look back now and see how, from such a family background and living through such an era, I have gone through so many changes over the years.

Li: The kind of research done by Chen Yinque and Gu Jiegang could not lead to a theory on coexistence that scholars from all over the world might consider. Old-school intellectuals would not have been able to conceive of your "differential modes of association." Your observations and theories about your own people are those of a Chinese scholar who has had both overseas experience and Western training. It is an extremely relevant theoretical framework that today is still often used by graduate students. I am wondering if, on the basis of such theoretical ideas, it would be possible to go even deeper, to see if, within the Chinese cultural order and life

[7] R.D. Arkush, *Fei Xiaotong and Sociology in Revolutionary China* (Harvard East Asian Monographs), Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1981.

experience, there are aspects that could assist the twenty-first century people to learn how to tolerate, understand, and appreciate different cultures, to develop a set of basic rules that all could agree to, and thus to go beyond this East-West divide. If there is anything in Chinese culture that can be unearthed, then you are the one to do it, because you have thought about these things in depth and for such a long time now, and have the necessary over-arching vision.

Fei: In fact, I have been thinking about this for quite some time now. Many published articles all talk about "socialism with Chinese characteristics." Marxism came to China and became Mao Zedong Thought and then Deng Xiaoping Theory. This is a process of sinicization, because now it is a long way from the German Marx version. So there is something "Chinese" about it, "Chinese characteristics" that are affecting things brought in from outside. We should look into them carefully: What are these characteristics? Where do they come from? No one is clear because no one has studied them carefully enough. Look at Western scholars: Durkheim was able to identify the particular features of Western capitalism; Weber was able to describe the characteristics of the spirit of capitalism and its cultural background. Now look at us, Chinese culture has certainly played a specific role in the development from Marxism through Mao Zedong Thought to Deng Xiaoping Theory, but we are not able to pinpoint these cultural features or how they influence things. As researchers of culture, we should take note of these questions and answer them.

Li: If you propose a topic and point the way, people might pick up on it and go forward with it. You have occasionally mentioned these ideas in the last few years. I think you should continue this exploration and tell others about your thoughts. After all, young people today do not have either your experience or stature; they won't have your breadth of vision, so you need to not only raise the issues but also point the way forward. You must write your ideas down, even if they are not completely mature yet. They can act as clues and stimulate more thought, and who knows, maybe along the way, something will develop. Many of your recent articles are very interesting, because you are able to raise issues no one has considered before, which can stimulate interest and further study. A person has a limited biological life span but his ideas can continue on for a long time. Your students or others will read your writings and then develop and expand your thinking, and that's how culture is passed on. We often refer to Durkheim whose academic life has extended over a century now, thanks to Levi-Strauss and other people building on his ideas.

Fei: One feature of Chinese culture is the great attention paid to the legacy of the past and its transmission to later generations. I had a conversation with Hu Yaobang[8] once, in which he talked about the importance of the family as a unit of society. This comes from reality. I agree with him, and the family is a very vigorous social unit.

[8] 1915–1989, one of the second generation of leaders of the Chinese Communist Party. He was General Secretary of the Party from 1981 to 1987.

In agriculture, after the people's communes,[9] we went back to the family, to the family production responsibility system,[10] which hugely liberated the forces of rural production. I now extrapolate this to the industrialization of the countryside, which probably once again will rely on the support of the family. Recently, I paid visits to villages in Zhejiang, Fujian, and Shandong provinces, where I saw that the really booming industries were family-owned enterprises. These are often quite small, but the family works willingly together as one, united, without waste, and highly efficient. True, the level of technology is still low, but enthusiasm is high. Once things are turned over to the family, people will do anything, and the force of that is extraordinary. If we could harness this, we could achieve wonders.

After hearing Hu Yaobang's ideas, I started thinking again. My topic of *Systems of Reproduction* is clearly not complete yet. I believe that the dynamism of Chinese society emanates from the generational link. The individual does not consider himself that important, and what is important is to bring honor to the ancestors, to continue the bloodline and raise outstanding children. Our responsibility is to thoroughly research and study this characteristic and to express it in modern language. We can't expect people of Chen Yinque's or Gu Jiegang's generation to do this! The strength of our generation is that we are in touch with the modern world and we can communicate and exchange with the world, so that others can understand us. This is what I call cross-cultural communication and is something only we who have new learning can do. The former generation excelled at looking deep into traditional culture. Now, both generations must work together to find out what characterizes Chinese culture, because we must go back into history to accomplish this task. Some of us need to spend some time carrying on the legacy of the former generation; we cannot abandon their achievements but must clarify, develop, and add to them. Chen Yinque and Gu Jiegang did excellent work on Qing Dynasty texts. These are like our roots that must be preserved, since this too is a feature of Chinese thinking. Fu Sinian carried on this work, Hu Shih too, though he already belonged to my generation. We must take over the baton from the former generation and develop it into the new spirit of the next. In this process, each person must find his place, be clear where he comes in the progression, and know what and how much he can do. I find these things extremely interesting, but the people who speak this language now are few and far between. Take my daughter, for instance, who is of the new generation: she doesn't really understand what I am talking about. Actually, it's not their fault, it's the education that has been disrupted so much, there's a gap now. It seems to me this desire to pass on from one generation to the next is a distinctive feature of Chinese civilization, because no other world culture has quite such a

[9] Initiated in 1958, the people's communes were based on the collective ownership of land and centralized agricultural production. They were responsible for the sale of their produce. Peasants were compensated in the form of work points according to how much they worked and had no control over what they planted. The communes were disbanded in 1980.

[10] A system of agricultural production in which the land, planning, accounting, and distribution remain under collective control, but the responsibility for planting, certain herding, and sideline occupations is given over to individual households in the form of quotas. Anything produced in excess is rewarded, while unfulfilled quotas must be compensated.

powerful tradition. Behind it lies the whole concept of kinship. At this point I am not too clear about it all, but I am thinking about it and hope to sort it out, add to it, and express it clearly so that others may understand. This can take various forms. I like writing essays, and a number of them have been published in *Dushu* magazine. The longer ones are about issues I have been considering for some time, and the shorter ones are about some insights and more casual thoughts.

Li: This recent paper you prepared for the seminar on Malinowski's dynamics of culture is also very important. You point out that Malinowski observed how the native cultures of African colonies were threatened with dislocation and extinction. If we look at what happened in China, even though we were never colonized, it's clear that our culture too came under enormous pressures. Non-Western cultures all seem to have similar experiences when they come into contact with the strong, dominant Western ones.

However, I think things are changing now. Even though Samuel Huntington is still arguing in support of cultural clashes, it is time now, as you said before, to start talking about cross-cultural communication. The twenty-first century is just around the corner; all nations and cultures should be working toward mutual tolerance, communication, and understanding. It's time, as you said, for mutual appreciation. This concept of "appreciating the best of others" is an expression of anthropology's true contribution to human civilization. Our most important goal today is to achieve coexistence with diversity, and that means not only "appreciating the best of others" but also reaching the point of "mutual appreciation." If everyone could do this, then the world could develop in a sustainable way.

From a holistic perspective, cultural pluralism is not some kind of dry slogan but instead what anthropologists have extrapolated from the biology of humankind. In the course of evolution, all organisms preserve many different kinds of genes and avoid specialization that would limit their adaptability to changing environments. Many ancient species "over adapted" to a particular environment and became so specialized that they eventually became extinct. Mankind is an organism too and should preserve the physical ability to adapt and to realize that the cultures it has created are also governed by the strict rules of biological evolution. So mankind must preserve as much diversity as possible in order to readapt should major changes occur. Western culture is already on the road to "specialization," as hinted at by the energy crisis and nuclear proliferation. Preserving the lifestyles of other ethnic groups with their cultural characteristics is as important as protecting rare species from extinction, so that human civilization as a whole may be sustainably preserved. That is the real significance of advocating tolerance, understanding, and appreciation for the cultures of others, what you have termed "appreciate the best of others."

Fei: These are exactly the set of issues I am reflecting on now.

Li: The article you mentioned in this recent series of lectures talked about other peoples but also hinted at us. I think that's what I read into the subtext. You are in fact saying that we must consider where we Chinese are going. With the twenty-first century just around the corner, Chinese culture must consider what kind of a devel-

opmental path to take. This is a huge question. Maybe now is not the time to launch a full discussion, but it should be raised, and it certainly should be reflected upon.

Fei: What you just said has reminded me of something else. I have recently been pondering the question of "one country two systems."[11] This is not just a political issue but also one of whether different things can accommodate each other and coexist, so it has cultural dimensions as well. This is an extremely important experiment, highly significant, and new in the history of mankind. Capitalism and socialism are usually seen as opposites, but in China's "one country two systems," they can coexist. When Deng Xiaoping came up with this solution, he was probably basing it more on practical than theoretical considerations, because he had seen such things in real life and felt it was possible. He was later proved right. That's where he is great. I don't see him as some immortal who can predict the future. Instead I see the cultural dimension, because I think this belief is deep in the bones of Chinese culture. And in Deng's case, at a unique moment in time, this innate belief rose to the surface giving him the insight: why do we have to keep fighting, why not "one country two systems"? That's what he thought and acted on, and the result is pretty good. By showing that opposites can be brought together to coexist, everyone can see it is possible and in the best interests of all. This is how we should understand the whole issue: that different systems can coexist as world cultures develop. There can be a unity of opposites. If we probe deeper, we find that there is a fundamental capacity within Chinese culture to tolerate this unity of opposites. Without it, there would be no Chinese nation or civilization today, certainly no "one country two systems."

At this point, it is difficult to give a clear theoretical explanation for this cultural essence, but it has definitely emerged from what our ancestors have always valued: integrity, sincerity, self-cultivation, family unity, national order, and peace for all. Each of these values has been gradually refined over thousands of years, and now it's hard to define accurately in modern language. However, they all definitely play a role in current reality. This in itself is quite amazing, and it is amply demonstrated by "one country two systems." We have many unique things in our culture that could resolve practical issues and difficulties. Now what we need to do is describe and explain them so that ordinary people can understand them, and we need to identify concepts that are acceptable to Western culture too. This is not easy but it must be done. I believe we Chinese are up to the task, because we have this accumulated culture behind us. Your expressions "large culture" and "small culture" are very apt. The "large culture" is formed in the process of absorbing "small cultures" which, after all, are actually the practical experiences of thousands of years of living on this territory of China. As practical experience becomes broader and more complex,

[11] A principle formulated by Deng Xiaoping, leader of the Chinese Communist Party, with the aim of peacefully reuniting China with certain regions having a different political system. These would become Special Administrative Regions and would retain their established social systems. Originally proposed to resolve relations with Taiwan, the principle has been implemented in the 1990s, when sovereignty over Hong Kong and Macau reverted to the People's Republic of China.

principles are born, and "large culture" emerges. We should expand on this relationship between "large" and "small cultures," and find what is special to the Chinese one.

Li: How do you think Chinese culture can play a more active role in the twenty-first century?

Fei: We are at a very important juncture. Last year, I went to Hong Kong to attend the handover ceremony.[12] I was very impressed. As the ceremony proceeded, I was not thinking about the pomp but about "one country, two systems." I would like everyone to examine this from a broader perspective, to think about it more deeply, and then analyze it from a theoretical angle. That could produce some new thinking. This concept is an innovation, it's Chinese culture's contribution to the world, and will affect how Eastern and Western cultures coexist: *we* are able to tolerate differences, so if *everyone* could, then the conditions exist for "integration with diversity." This is an expression of a Chinese way of thinking, it includes "each appreciates its own best" and "each appreciates the best of others." Discovering the best in the differences between oneself and others can lead to true appreciation and creates a heartfelt, genuine understanding and admiration, not something short lived for the sole sake of economic benefit.

Li: I suggest you write all this down, point by point, and then develop your ideas. What you said about integration with diversity deserves further elaboration. A school of "ethnic group theory" has emerged in contemporary cultural anthropology, which argues that ethnic groups are not defined by objective cultural attributes but rather by subjective self-identification with a specific culture. In other words, proponents of the theory point out that objective attributes such as language, customs, cultural systems, and even physical traits may change and are thus insufficient for defining an ethnic group. The only real criterion on which the group is based is a conscious self-identification. This theory was actually first proposed by your old friend Professor Edmund Leach. In his research of the Kachin people of northern Burma, he observed that there was not much real difference in tribal culture between them and their Chan neighbors. However, the Kachin subjectively believed they belonged to a different ethnic group and so they differentiated themselves from the Chan. This theory of self-identification has become very widespread, particularly after *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries* edited by Fredrik Barth was published in 1969. It has become a model theory. There is much in it that is valuable, but there are also some flaws, and it is often misused, deliberately or not, for instance, when some anthropologists and ethnic historians rely on it to question the existence of our "Chinese nation" or even of the "Han people."

Personally, I find much to admire in the theory but also have some criticisms and questions. First of all, I believe that so-called objective cultural attributes should not be limited only to those that can be observed, such as language, dress, customs and

[12] At 11:30 pm on June 30, 1997, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland formerly handed over jurisdiction of the colony of Hong Kong to the central government of the People's Republic of China. Starting from July 1, 1997, Hong Kong became a Special Administrative Region of China, in accordance with the terms of the "Joint Declaration" signed by the two governments in 1984. The region is governed by a chief administrative officer.

habits, physical traits, etc. I believe restricting "culture" to these "observable" things is a misunderstanding of "culture," which includes many things that belong to the realm of the mind that cannot be physically "observed," what anthropologists call the "grammar of culture." These include values, worldviews, philosophies of life, and even systems of logic. Such abstract cultural attributes are quite hard to change, yet they also make up the cultural core of a nation and cannot be ignored. Of course, some will say that abstract things of the mind belong in the realm of the subjective, and yet are not these deeper cultural structures of thinking precisely what cultural researchers have objectively analyzed and identified as part of what makes a national culture distinctive? Seen from this angle, the line between "objective" and "subjective" becomes very hard to draw.

Here, I would like to particularly mention the inherent cultural characteristics of the Chinese. I believe that since very early on, Chinese civilization has accepted and absorbed cultural attributes and core concepts from many different traditions. Perhaps this is what you call "diversity within integration." This is not something that can be observed directly but is the common impression of anthropologists and ethnic historians who understand the deep cultural structures of Chinese civilization. This capacity to accept and absorb as a fundamental way of being probably developed over the millennia in response to changing overall environments and the need for mutual exchanges of resources and then gradually evolved into a worldview based on "harmony and balance." In other words, a central tenet of Central Plains' culture was inclusiveness and absorption of surrounding ethnicities. This constituted the over-arching "theme of integration" within which numerous ethnic groups interacted over thousands of years. Analysis of all historical periods and processes reveals the stages or steps in the course of acceptance of this "main theme." We observe how the neighboring peoples joined this "integration" and how at some stages, they were reluctant or even rejected it. This is totally different from the nation states of the West that do not have this "theme of integration" in their tradition. Western cultural reasoning focuses only on how to differentiate between "your group" and "my group," so it ignores other cultures which have, in contrast, focused on trying to become a group of "others." Examining Chinese culture from that kind of theoretical perspective will obviously produce the conclusion that Chinese cultural processes and phenomena are "anomalies" that do not fit the normal pattern of development. This is a mistake that cultural anthropologists, who focus on discovering cultural biases, must not make. In other words, if the model of self-identification in ethnic group theory is applied purely through a European cultural prism, there is a serious risk of overgeneralization. On the other hand, if there can be an unbiased understanding of the characteristics of Chinese culture, then the theory can explain a great deal.

All in all, I feel that your concepts of "diversity within integration" together with your extension to "harmony and balance" are important ideas, worth examining in depth and developing further. Chinese national culture can thus contribute in significant ways to mankind's common future in the twenty-first century.

Fei: It looks as if the world is definitely moving toward interdependence. The economy will be first, just look at the recent Asian Financial Crisis.[13] Once it hit, everyone was affected: "the invisible hand" swept everyone into the same basket. From my perspective, "the invisible hand" includes economic, cultural, and social forces. It might be invisible but it certainly exists within the basic principles of culture.

Li: China played an unprecedented, unique role in this crisis. The fact that the *renminbi* was not devalued was a huge stabilizing force for East Asian economies. China had never played this kind of role before in the twentieth century. In the past, Japan was the overall stabilizer for East Asian economies, but this time it was a factor for uncertainty, and instead it was China that became the force for stability. We should give some serious thought to this switching of roles and what enabled China overnight to take on such a prominent one. Of course there are economic and financial reasons, but beyond those, there are also cultural ones….

Fei: Consideration of others, not just of oneself, is an extremely important element in Chinese norms of social interaction. "Treat others' elderly with the reverence I treat my own, treat others' children with the kindness I treat my own," "put oneself in the other's shoes," "think for the other person," and "place oneself in the other's position" all extol this attitude toward others. Here once again my differential modes of association come into play. And they are not empty words, they really are part and parcel of the lives of ordinary Chinese people, and they grow out of Chinese culture. The Cultural Revolution (1966–1976) rejected all this and tried to destroy it. But I don't think it should be rejected nor in fact can it be because fine traditions will always live on and play a role in daily life. We cultural anthropologists should tease out these things and explain them to everyone. Every day, Chinese culture is playing a very practical, concrete role. We must seek knowledge from this reality and then tell society about what we have learned. This is our responsibility as intellectuals, especially those who study culture. Sima Qian[14] said the purpose of his work was to "study the link between Heaven and Man and understand the changes in history." That's the principle of research: to "find" knowledge from real conditions and then "apply" it back to them. When a financial crisis hits, one can choose to act or stand back: others devalued their currency, so I could too. So why did China choose *not* to devalue? There was an element of thinking about others in there. We did that because we are Chinese, and we are influenced by our cultural roots.

These last few days, I have been watching the Football World Cup and have been quite inspired. Even when competition is so intense, it can still be peaceful. Different teams face each other on the pitch in fierce struggle and rivalry, but everyone has a

[13] The Asian Financial Crisis of 1997 began in Thailand and swept through all the countries of Southeast and East Asia, affecting in varying degrees their stock markets, currencies, and capital assets. Most countries devalued their currencies, and some nearly went bankrupt.

[14] BC 145–133. Historian and writer of the Western Han dynasty (BC 206–223 AD). He compiled *The Records of the Historian*, the first comprehensive history of China, covering 3,000 years from the mythical kings of antiquity up to BC 122 of the reign of Emperor Wu of the Western Han.

common "law" and an agreed spirit of sportsmanship, and so friendship is possible. When I wrote about Tang Peisong in "A Leading Intellectual from Tsinghua University,"[15] I also talked about sportsmanship and teamwork. Such attitudes are required in all social interactions. After all, we know that over mankind's long history, generations of people have developed many fine things, both in China and elsewhere. Modern man aspires to peace; this means that we cultural researchers have to contribute by extracting everything different cultures have developed over the ages that encourage peaceful coexistence. We Chinese anthropologists have a responsibility to redefine the spirit of "consideration for others" so inherent in our culture for the present context and explain how to apply it. There are not many people doing this kind of study these days, and it certainly has not become a general trend. We sociologists and anthropologists have to create a positive atmosphere in which we affirm the fine things in our own culture and also identify the bad, so that the good can be improved and applied back into our current practice. As we interact and communicate with the Western world, our good traditions should be incorporated into world traditions. So first we localize and then we communicate to the world. At this point, there is still no group of scholars able to do this, so they must be trained. This is going to be an important yet difficult task for the next couple of decades. Our advanced seminars at Peking University are part of this effort.

We have passed through an extended, negative historical period of rejection of our culture, which finally climaxed in the Cultural Revolution when we ourselves doubted there was anything of value in our Chinese civilization. That is all in the past now. Last year was a turning point with the return of Hong Kong and "one country, two systems." The whole world sees what China is today. We once more have confidence in ourselves. Armed with this newfound confidence, we must now settle down to think carefully about how we have achieved this international standing and how we must guard against "egocentrism" in the future. There is this notion now of "East-as-center" and of self-aggrandizement, as if China can do great things all on its own. This reminds me of one of my concerns, once raised by Pan Guangdan when he talked about the overall educational level of the Chinese people. The present cohort of intellectuals is not up to the quality of the previous. Ever since the War Against Japanese Aggression (1937–1945) and up until the reforms and opening in 1978, there has been continuous turmoil and chaos and too much destruction in our country; the younger generation has not had the chance to really study and learn. Without sound education, how can there be high quality people? That's why I believe we now need stability so that we can all catch our breaths. The government is determined to support education, and the students are determined to learn, so now is the time to train the people we need. They will be well educated, will be mindful of mankind's development goals, will understand how different cultures can coexist, and will be able to carry forward the fine elements of Chinese culture into world modernization.

[15] In Chinese, *Qinghua ren de yidai fengsao* (《清华人的一代风骚》), *Dushu*, 1991, no. 1. This article is dedicated to Tang Peisong (1903–2001), plant physiologist and biochemist, founder of plant physiology in China.

Li: Which reminds me, can we come back to the first topic of "benefiting the people"? You have been looking into regional development recently, so I wonder if you have any new projects or ideas.

Fei: This year, I began working on a new project to use the Beijing-Kowloon Railway to string together a "lollipop of toffee haws." By this I mean to use the railway as the main transport line to promote the development of a string of mid-sized towns along it. The influence of these towns will then radiate outwards to the surrounding villages and pull them forward. This will create an area of faster economic growth between the eastern coastal and central regions. What happened along the Shanghai-Nanjing Railway is a good example of this process. Between Nanjing and Shanghai lie the midsized cities of Suzhou, Wuxi, Changzhou, Zhenjiang, and others. I would hope that the Beijing-Kowloon Railway can also boost the growth of a string of cities, which is why I call this project the "lollipop of toffee haws." But now this has to be put into practice.

I went to visit each of these places along the railway to see whether there was any basis for this and what they already have and what they still lack. I had previously been to some of them before, so this was a return visit. I went to see Liaocheng, Fu Sinian's hometown. It is not bad at all, things are quite developed there. They make the Shuangli (brand) farm truck that is very suited to rural needs and not that expensive. The products of their township enterprises are sold not only in China but also in South America and Africa. It's an interesting example of how the world has entered the age of intercontinental economics.

Not long ago, I published an article in *Dushu* magazine on the topic of "intercontinental economics." The rural auto industry in Liaocheng gave me these new ideas. Our foreign trade does not have to be limited only to the United States or Japan; we should also open up markets in developing countries and regions of South America and Africa. The intercontinental economy should be our direction. We have a cheap, hardworking labor force; this is our advantage so we should make the most of it to learn new technologies and use appropriate ones to produce things adapted to the needs of developing countries. This is a huge market. If more enterprises in the central regions of China could join it, farmers' incomes would rise, and the whole central region would then develop. Once the farmers have money, the domestic market would grow too. This would be killing two birds with one stone. By entering the international market, we become richer ourselves, and the domestic market expands too.

I often say that the market is in the pockets of the farmers. Once they have money, they will buy TV sets and washing machines. It's a gigantic market. But we need to produce things they need and can afford, and that will bring them into modern living. I have seen this happening in many places. For example, in the north, the farmers used to sleep on hollow brick beds. In the winter when it was cold, they burned firewood inside the bed to warm it. Now they live in apartments, storing and burning firewood is inconvenient, and they want something cleaner and easier, so they have switched to radiators. These are easy to produce and many farmers are buying them, so it has become one of the ways village enterprises have prospered.

In one recent visit I went to a village where the farmers had gone one step further. They figured out how to use grain stubble to produce biogas. A village needs only a couple of hundred thousand *yuan* to buy equipment that can then produce all the energy for cooking and heating for its entire population. The farmers had found their own path to modern living. I was thrilled to see all these examples of development and encouraged them by telling them why I thought their methods should be popularized and spread about. That thrilled them too. So that's what I am doing now. At this point, I have gone halfway along the railway, but I plan to continue. I am keeping records of everything I see, and on my return I will make a proposal to the authorities: a plan with specific steps to boost development in the region along the Beijing-Kowloon Railway. All through my travels, I have received a warm welcome from the farmers, as well as the local officials in the counties and towns. Whenever I can give them ideas about how to improve their lives, I feel great satisfaction. I am convinced that Chinese farmers have the know-how, the perseverance, and the resourcefulness so that once they get going, there will be no stopping them. We should have confidence in them and let them increase production. This will maintain a peaceful environment, and if it can be sustained, we will have several decades in which to seriously study Chinese culture from a higher theoretical level. I think that's how we should proceed. Of course, I can no longer do this anymore, but you can certainly take on the task and play an important role. At this point, we cannot match Taiwan yet, but you can take this information back and encourage everyone to think about the big questions. Don't just stay with the small things. We must stand higher and look further; a whole wide world is waiting for us, and everybody can contribute. What an exciting prospect! We now really have the means to achieve what our ancestors dreamed of: harmony for all under heaven.

Malinowski said something very insightful in his *Dynamics of Culture*. He noted that cultural contacts occurring under colonialism end up destroying culture because of the hegemonism innate to colonialism. Nowadays hegemony is totally unacceptable. For positive results, interaction between cultures must occur on a basis of equality. Equality, coexistence, mutual understanding, and learning from each other's strengths will lead to a cultural blending or, as we say in Chinese, harmony under heaven. We must still put ourselves in others' shoes, consider how others feel, and treat others like we would our own. If we think about things in this way, hopefully there will be less trouble in the world; we certainly don't want a nuclear conflict that would wipe human culture off the face of the earth. The heads of state of China and the United States are meeting over the next few days. This is positive and constructive. How wonderful if these two major powers could live in peace! We must figure out a way to achieve peaceful coexistence and, even further, one for common prosperity so that everyone can benefit from greater development.

Li: I am really extremely grateful for this opportunity today to hear your thoughts on these subjects. Both the topics you mentioned are very important. The first is to understand the characteristics of Chinese culture from a theoretical perspective and to recognize that it can contribute to world culture with its qualities of inclusiveness, understanding, and mutual appreciation, which will pave the way for a path to common prosperity and harmony. There are very few people who can think so

profoundly about such things. You have probed Chinese culture and discovered these fine qualities and can now suggest a number of important ideas that will help later scholars study these themes. In this way your academic life will carry on and bear fruit.

The second topic is about applying research or "benefiting the people" which is equally significant. In many cases we tend to focus on only one aspect, so that theory often forgets to be useful, while concentrating on the practical makes it hard to shift over to the abstract. In your academic career, you have managed to do both: develop theories and turn this knowledge back into physical results. The completion of the Beijing-Kowloon Railway promptly led you to think of a "lollipop of toffee haws," which will become another good example of tangible regional development. No doubt you will turn it into a "toffee haws theory"! I see that your health is excellent and your mind is as sharp as ever. To be honest, today I was testing you a bit. I have read your articles and always find them very inspiring. Listening to you today, I can feel the power of your mind. I am really impressed and very happy for you. You still have many years ahead, so you can take your time to arrange your ideas. I look forward to reading more of your articles and to hearing your thoughts.

Fei: Then you must come more often. You can raise questions that we can discuss together. Now that we are both retired, we can concentrate on studying more. As Confucius said, what greater pleasure is there than meeting old friends and continuing to learn?

Bei Taipingzhuang, Beijing
June 28, 1998

Chapter 18
Pioneering a New Academic Trend

I would like to thank the top administrators of Peking University for letting me listen in on this meeting. I came because I am eager to see how these young people I have been training (at the Institute of Sociology and Social Anthropology of Peking University) are doing.

Recently, I read a book called *Chancellors of Beijing University and Chinese Culture*,[1] which describes what all the chancellors of Peking University (and its predecessors) have accomplished, from the time of the principal of the Imperial University of Peking, through Cai Yuanpei,[2] Hu Shih, and Ma Yinchu.[3] The book moved me greatly and made me think about where Peking University stands today. What are the cultural tasks we must take on under the new circumstances of the reforms and opening up? It seems to me that, once again, Peking University must stand at the forefront of a new academic trend.

There are many different cultures in the world: European, American, Islamic, Indian, and Chinese, among others. They all meet and talk. The world is now a global village, a time of diverse civilizations. Now is the chance for Peking University to pioneer a new trend.

What sort of trend? I use the term "cultural self-awareness" to describe it. I realize that China is following Deng Xiaoping's direction of socialism with Chinese characteristics and is building a new spiritual civilization through the "four modernizations."[4] Peking University should seize this opportunity. When history

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Statement at Peking University at a meeting of key academic departments.

[1] In Chinese, *Beida xiaozhang he Zhongguo wenhua* (《北大校长和中国文化》), Beijing: SDX Joint Publishing Company, 1988.

[2] 1868–1940, early revolutionary, political activist, educator; first minister of education of the Republic of China; chancellor of Beijing University from 1916 to 1927; responsible for major reforms in academia.

[3] 1882–1982, economist, educator, and demographer.

[4] Modernization of industry, agriculture, national defense, and science and technology.

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progresses to a certain point, a group of people somewhere must step forward to create a new trend. I believe at this point, this is cultural self-awareness. All nations are asking questions about their own cultures: why do we live like this? What is the meaning of this life style? How will things progress? It's the responsibility of the social sciences to answer these questions. The natural sciences are developing very fast; biological research has already produced the human genome, and technology has extended our activities from the earth to outer space. We in the social sciences must find a way to catch up, so we must seriously look into our own cultural traditions.

Peking University has always spearheaded new academic trends. During the period from 1915 to 1926,[5] Cai Yuanpei was a leading figure of reform. Both Peking and Tsinghua Universities are academic centers, and as Marxist thought continues to evolve, they should foster a corresponding self-awareness, that is, a conscious knowledge of culture. It seems to me this should not be limited to China alone, many advanced countries are also pondering this and taking action. We Chinese should seize this opportunity to join them and advance this new academic trend. In the seventeenth century, the Western Renaissance produced the concept of "individual self-awareness." It looks as if the twenty-first century is going to begin a process of "mankind's cultural self-awareness," in which there is the desire to know more about one's own culture.

Sociology investigates human life within the group, and social anthropology studies culture, which is the creation of this group living. Where is culture? It exists in the behavior and consciousness of each member of a group. Culture is transmitted from generation to generation and expressed in the life of each individual; it changes and evolves continuously. We Chinese should probe our culture and the life of our people to gain understanding of its history and present state. Most often, people live within their culture but do not knowingly experience, understand, or interpret it. This is "unconscious culture." We must understand why national and regional cultures are different, and this kind of comparative research will lead to "self-awareness." For China, this work should be done in Peking University because it has a tradition and also because it has been successful in the past. The issue now is how to carry on this legacy and do even better.

On my business card I never write any of my titles of public office, only that I am a university professor, because research is what I value and love the most. You all know that I have resigned from being the president of the Minmeng Party,[6] and next year my term as vice-president of the National People's Congress will be over. In the remaining years of my life, I would like to continue my academic work. I think Peking University should pioneer a new trend, and I would like to be a part of it.

Last year, at the celebration held in my hometown on the 60th anniversary of the start of my academic career, I presented a paper called "Rereading the Preface to

[5] Period when Chinese intellectuals intensely examined and critiqued traditional culture and proposed following Mr. *De* (democracy) and Mr. *Sai* (science) as the way to save China.

[6] Abbreviation for the *Zhongguo minzhu tongmeng* (Chinese Democratic Alliance Party), composed mostly of senior educators.

Peasant Life in China."[7] My professor wrote this preface to the published edition of my doctoral dissertation 60 years ago. On rereading it today, I realize now that he had already identified the weaknesses of anthropology. All my academic advisors have taught me to observe directly how people live and to understand society and culture through people's actual lived experience. All scientific data must come from practice. Most early anthropologists liked to go out to alien cultures to find out how *their* people lived. But in my dissertation, I investigated the lives of my *own* native people. At the time this was something entirely new in anthropology, and it opened a new path by extending the former study of the so-called savages to using anthropological field methods on familiar, local "civilized" people. At the time, I was a young student just entering the science and I was not aware of crossing this "civilized/savage" threshold that stymied Western research at the time. That's why I often say that I "unconsciously planted a willow sapling" that later flourished. Now 60 years on, I suddenly understand why Professor Malinowski called my work a "milestone" in the development of anthropology. He was applauding my efforts to consciously understand my *own* culture. What I had done was observe the life, production, and distribution of Chinese peasants in their village and explain things as *I* understood them. This attempt to examine one's native culture was a step forward for anthropology in those days.

We Chinese have been writing about and describing how our people live for a very long time now. *A Dream of Red Mansions*[8] is just one example, but this was a fictionalized account, describing the writer's personal impressions. Anthropology, on the other hand, observes people in real life and then systematically and factually describes this human world; in other words, it employs the scientific, positivist method to learn about culture. That's why I believe the effect of anthropology is to encourage cultural self-awareness.

Mankind depends on culture to survive and live, and culture is the continuously evolving experience of the community, accumulated over many generations. No one can escape from the culture learned in childhood. Just like the Monkey King in *Journey to the West*[9] who thinks he can do whatever he likes but discovers that no matter how great his magical powers to somersault into space, he can never escape from the palm of Buddha, people cannot escape from their own culture. However, humans have the intelligence to understand it and to change it. Anthropology is the science that uses modern scientific methods to learn about culture. Cai Yuanpei,

[7] Now an appendix in *Peasant Life in China—A Field Study of Country Life in the Yangtze Valley* (Beijing: Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press, 2010).

[8] In Chinese, *Hong lou meng*, 《红楼梦》. One of the Four Great Classical Novels of Chinese literature, written by Cao Xueqin (1715–1763?), about the rise and fall of a prominent family in the mid-Qing dynasty (1644–1911).

[9] In Chinese, *Xi you ji*, 《西游记》. One of the Four Great Classical Novels of Chinese literature, written in the sixteenth century, authorship uncertain. It is a fictionalized, allegorical account of the true journey to India of the Buddhist monk Xuanzang in the Tang dynasty (618–907). He is helped and protected by mythical "disciples," including Sun Wukong, the Monkey King, who has magical powers.

chancellor of Peking University, was the first person to introduce anthropology into China.

Sixty years ago, I first encountered sociology and anthropology right here, in this campus on the shores of Lake Weiming. At the time this was Yenching University, and a number of foreign scholars were invited over to lecture. One of them was the American sociologist Robert Park, founder of the Chicago School. He led us directly to the residents of Beijing to learn sociology. Another was A.R. Radcliffe-Brown, an English anthropologist who was one of the founders of functionalism. He encouraged us to go to the countryside to study the peasants. I was really fortunate to study under these two scholars who were on the cutting edge of their fields. Influenced by them, I accepted the ideas of my teacher Mr. Wu Wenzao,[10] to create a "Chinese school of sociology" and the "community research" method. On his recommendation, I went to study anthropology first under Professor Shirokogoroff at Tsinghua University and then to London under B. Malinowski. This is the path I have traveled for 60 years and I am still following it.

Everything I have experienced has convinced me that, though we have lived in this ancient culture all our lives, we still do not possess a systematic, factual understanding of it. In our social behavior, we just "do" without really knowing "why," yet we are now living in a period of worldwide cultural transformation, so not surprisingly we are often troubled. Actually, we Chinese are not the only ones to feel like this, it is a crisis confronting all of mankind in the twenty-first century. Everyone is living in a multicultural environment, but we have not found a common order to help us coexist in peace.

As a scholar of the humanities devoted to studying society and culture, I am particularly sensitive to the perplexity people feel, and I am acutely aware of how urgent this matter is. That's why, in spite of my advanced years, I feel compelled to call upon my colleagues in the humanities to focus their energies on pioneering this new, timely academic trend of self-reflection about our own society and culture. I urge the use of a positivist, factual, and scientific spirit to reexamine and understand our long history.

This is going to be an arduous and ambitious project. Many disciplines will need to work together: philosophy, ethics, political science, economics, biology, psychology, aesthetics, sociology, and anthropology. Scholars in all these areas will work toward the common goal of "cultural self-awareness" each from his/her own academic perspective and together will create this new style of research. I believe that in China, only Peking University has the capacity to take on such a project, which is why I did not want to pass up this opportunity to meet with senior university administrators and boldly propose this concept of "cultural self-awareness." I hope you will give me your comments.

I would like to say in conclusion that I have great sympathy for all our chancellors. I know how hard it is, how many administrative tasks need your attention every day, and how, like the general managers of a company, you must focus on bringing

[10] 1901–1985, sociologist, anthropologist, ethnic studies scholar, and one of the earliest proponents of and researchers in a "Chinese" school of sociology, anthropology, and ethnic studies.

in additional revenue. I hope there is a way to free up some of your time and energy for planning scholarly development and for considering how to contribute to the growth of China's spiritual civilization. These are huge responsibilities, and we must not pass up this time of major reform. My hope is that you will take the lead in this new trend of "cultural self-awareness."

I'm afraid I might have gone on too long. Please don't hesitate to point out anything that is inappropriate.

Thank you.

The text above is compiled from notes taken at the meeting by Pan Naigu. I have done some minor editing, but on reading it over, I feel there is a need to explain "cultural self-awareness" a bit more.

This term describes the "self-knowledge" that the members of a particular culture should have about their own traditions: knowledge of their history, how it developed, how it influences their lives, what it means, and how other cultures have affected it. It does not contain any sense of "cultural regression" or "return to the past" nor does it advocate "total Westernization" or "becoming like the other." More self-knowledge is necessary to have greater control over cultural development, so that when we are adapting to new environments, we can retain more initiative in our cultural choices.

Achieving cultural self-awareness is a difficult process: it means first knowing one's own culture and then choosing what to preserve and what to reject as it adapts to new circumstances. Second, it means understanding other cultures it encounters and what should or should not be absorbed from them. After all cultures have reached this state of self-awareness, this world of diverse cultures can create, through this mutual blending and assimilation, a commonly acceptable order and set of rules that will allow them all to coexist peacefully, develop the best of their traditions, and work together for development. Seven years ago at my 80th birthday party in Japan attended by many old friends, I said that I hoped the future of anthropology would allow "each to appreciate its own best, appreciate the best of others, all to appreciate the best together to build greater harmony for all." This summarizes the process of achieving cultural self-awareness that I talked about today.

January 4, 1997

Part VI

Chapter 19
Thoughts on the Cultural Resources of the Western Regions

19.1 Comrades

I am here today not to give a scholarly report but to get to know more artist friends. On the 8th of last month, Director Qu visited me and invited me here to meet you all. But I had some small health problems and had to go to hospital for 2 weeks. I am better now, so here I am finally. There are two ministers of culture here today, a former one and the current one, and both are my friends. One of them comes from the same town as myself (Minister Sun Jiazheng), and the other I have known from 50 years ago (former Minister Zhou Weizhi).

It was 50 years ago that Premier Zhou Enlai[1] organized a group to visit ethnic peoples, of which I was a member. This was extremely important at the time, as it was the first step in our efforts to make contact with the many minority peoples in the country. Our mission was to visit the regions where they lived and to get to know them. The Premier felt that art was the best way to break the ice, so an artistic troupe was part of the group. That's when I first met Comrade Zhou Weizhi. I was not yet 50 at the time, and now I am 90. How time has flown by! You could say my connection with the arts actually began with him. He was in charge of the song and dance troupe, while I was director of the whole group, which included the troupe even though I knew nothing about the arts.

Speech delivered at the National Academy of Arts. Arranged from a recording by Fang Lili, published in *Cultural and Art Studies* (in Chinese, *Wenyi Yanjiu*, 《文艺研究》), 2000.
The Western Regions include the municipality of Chongqing; the provinces of Sichuan, Guizhou, Yunnan, Gansu, Qinghai, and Shaanxi; and the autonomous regions of Tibet, Ningxia Hui, Xinjiang, Inner Mongolia, and Guangxi.

[1] 1898–1976. Key member of the first generation of leaders of the Chinese Communist Party, one of the founders of the People' Liberation Army, Prime Minister and first minister of foreign affairs of the People's Republic of China after 1949, and vice chairman of the Central Military Council. He remained Prime Minister up until the time of his death, Zhou Enlai had an international reputation as a distinguished and skillful diplomat.

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Premier Zhou had a long-term vision: he wanted to build unity between all our ethnic peoples, to strengthen the ties between us to form an integrated Chinese nation. He believed the best way to build such bonds was through the arts, so wherever we went, our first job was to put on song and dance performances with the local people. Later our troupe returned and set up a Central National Song and Dance Troupe. I worked hard to get it going, but later was no longer involved because I am not an artist. However, over time I came to realize how right Premier Zhou was to propose the arts as an effective way to approach these minority peoples. After all, we were the first official group in New China to initiate contacts with them. Through cultural gatherings, by singing and dancing together we got to know them, and they welcomed us into their midst. The Premier had admonished us time and again to be mindful and modest, to learn the local music and dances, and to integrate them into our own numbers. Those early troupe members are all elderly now, and many have already passed on. The tenor Wu Songhua is a fine singer, and we are still in touch and he still calls me "old group leader."

So that is how my connection with the arts began. A few days ago, I said to Fang Lili, "You must find comrade Zhou Weizhi for me!" I wanted not only to pick up our friendship from 50 years ago, but also to follow up on those ideas of Premier Zhou's about the role of art and to join this new movement to develop the Western Regions, in other words, to discover and understand the cultural resources of these regions through the arts. This is what I want to talk about today, "conserving, developing and building on the cultural resources of the Western Regions." I have been giving a lot of thought to this topic, thanks to one of your researchers, Fang Lili. She is a student of mine, one of a number studying and working in the Institute of Sociology and Anthropology that I set up in Peking University where I advise several students.

I have always been very interested in the arts. Fifty years ago there was an opportunity for me to get into this field, and I nearly succeeded. Peng Zhen was mayor of Beijing at the time, and I told him about all the unique handicrafts of Beijing, like cloisonné, and that I wanted to research this technique. Already then I proposed conserving the old art forms and looking into how to build on our traditions. But in the end I shifted to ethnic studies and that project was abandoned. Then I met Fang Lili when she came to Peking University to study anthropology with me. She proposed to look at art from an anthropological perspective. Her postdoctoral dissertation is a field study of Jingdezhen pottery art, which she subsequently revised into a book. I found her whole project and later her book very good. Reading about it all revived my old interests and so now I am going back to things I wanted to do 50 years ago.

I went to visit Jingdezhen and gave a presentation at a forum Fang Lili organized on "One Hundred Years of Traditional Handicrafts." In my talk, I said that I believed that human beings must first satisfy their survival needs, after which they will aspire to art and beauty, the highest forms of culture. So the first needs are food and shelter, and then comes the desire to fulfill emotional needs that distinguish us from animals, and then these emotions are expressed in art. Culture's ultimate and highest aspiration is to enter a realm of art, which has existed for thousands of years in

human history. I have read many books on archaeology, and I have noticed that there is one huge difference between Chinese and Western art, and that is the existence of jade artifacts in the former but not in the latter. Jade objects do not just represent an art form, they also represent a cultural worldview. My archeological friends and I have all pointed out that they are actually one of the factors leading to the difference between Chinese and Western art. So I am trying to gradually acquire an understanding of art, because up until now I have been an outsider. Director Qu's invitation to speak to you is actually giving me an opportunity to get to know you and your institute. Gathered here are not only many of the most talented artists in China but also where some of the most sophisticated research in art theory is taking place. I really hope that you will continue to grow and that you will contribute more to the development of Chinese art and culture.

This brings me to the real subject of today's talk, and that is the development of the Western Regions. The Party Central Committee and President Jiang Zemin have issued this call to us. Our economy has developed to a certain level now, and it is time to spread this development to the Western Regions. I have been studying and observing them since 1984 and 1985, although of course, back then I was not focusing on art, but more on issues of basic survival for the people here, since my goal in life has always been to work "for the benefit of the people." In 1938, I wrote a book called *Peasant Life in China*[2] in which I concluded that China's biggest problem is poverty and the backwardness of production. If we Chinese want to survive, we have to raise our productivity. By now there has been general consensus on this, and raising productivity, or solving the basic issues of survival, has been at the heart of all major strategies drawn up by the Party. In the 1980s, when I was rehabilitated from being a Rightist,[3] I resumed my work and considered this the start of my second academic career. I returned to my previous focus on rural life and how to raise agricultural production. I proposed that industry should move to the countryside and noted that the rise of village and township enterprises was an effective way to reduce poverty there. As these enterprises flourished, I then proposed building up the towns and small cities, which has now become a major trend. However, my research focus still remained on how to solve the problems of poverty and basic existence in the countryside.

In the last few years, however, I have taken up another issue, that is, once we have enough to eat and wear, what do we do next? And that's where the arts come into the picture. Can we go one step further to develop the arts and continue to grow in that realm? And as I pondered this issue, I thought of the effort to develop the Western Regions that is such a hot topic these days. However, most of the time, the

[2] Hsiao-Tung Fei, *Peasant Life in China—A Field Study of Country Life in the Yangtze Valley*, London: Routledge, 1939. (In Chinese, *Jingcun Jingji*, 《江村经济》).

[3] A widespread political campaign initiated by the Communist Party in 1957, which resulted in many intellectuals being labeled "Rightists" or "followers of a Rightist (conservative/bourgeois) political path" after they had publicly made proposals and suggestions to the CCP. The movement silenced discussion and debate in intellectual circles. Most Rightists were rehabilitated after the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976).

discussion focuses mostly on the material aspects of development. Of course, this is very important, but so are culture and the arts. I recall that when I was in high school, a group of Chinese and foreign scientists organized an expedition to the Northwest, where they not only discovered many natural resources but also many cultural ones too. One of these scientists was a Swede named Sven Hedin[4] who wrote a great deal about this expedition and became very famous. Dunhuang[5] and other ancient sites and artifacts along the Silk Road were also rediscovered at this time. These are all part of the rich cultural heritage of the Northwest. To develop our own culture and determine a direction is going to require new research so as to answer questions about culture and art that the whole world needs to resolve.

There has been huge scientific progress. The first time I saw a computer was at Peking University, and two special buildings were dedicated to it. It was huge, occupying a hall double the size of this one. Now one machine can fit into one's pocket. This electronic world began back in the 1970s, and I am delighted to have witnessed this change. I have also seen with my own eyes how we have moved from the industrial age to the electronic one, but I don't know where this second shift is taking us. Probably no one does. The first big shift was when mankind went from hand to machine production, which has already spread all over the world, so the age of industrialization is now coming to an end. The second shift from the industrial age to the information age has just begun. I will not be here to see the result, but you will be. In other words, people are only just starting to ponder the repercussions on culture of this information age; some have even suggested that we are not heading in the right direction. My opinion is that we cannot only focus on our physical needs, on the relation between man and material things, we must also value human relations which involve emotions and feelings, and that's where art comes in. I recently read a number of books by Professor Zhang Zhiwen of Peking University, where he discusses the Chinese philosophical concept of "oneness between Nature and Man" (*tian ren he yi*) which goes back to the earliest murky time of creation when man, heaven, and earth were one. This is a nonrational world of emotion that belongs in the realm of the arts, in stark contrast to the rational world of the West.

I am not going to say anything particularly highbrow here, just that we need to develop the whole field of culture and the arts. A couple of days ago, Mr. Qiao Jianzhong, a native of the Northwest and one of your authorities on traditional music, gave me a copy of his book *The Land and the Song*,[6] in which he delves into

[4] 1865–1952. A Swedish geographer, topographer, explorer, and travel writer. During four expeditions to Central Asia, he discovered the Transhimalaya and the sources of the Brahmaputra, Indus, and Sutlej Rivers, Lake Lop Nur, etc. The posthumous publication of his *Central Asia Atlas* marked the conclusion of his life's work.

[5] Located in Gansu province of Northwest China. It was a major stop on the ancient Silk Road and is best known for the nearby Dunhuang Caves, or Mogao Grottoes, which contain many fine examples of Buddhist art in the form of murals and statues, created between the fourth and the fourteenth century AD. It is the source of valuable ancient Buddhist manuscripts that are now collected in museums in Beijing, London, Paris, and Berlin.

[6] Qiao Jianzhong, *The Land and the Song* (In Chinese, *Tudi yu ge*. 《土地与歌》), Shanghai: Conservatory of Music Press, 2009.

the origins of the *huar* and *xintianyou* folk music forms. Starting from existing folk songs, he traces them back all the way back to the *Book of Song*s,[7] examining how they have evolved over the millennia into the present *xintianyou* style. This tradition is a huge treasure trove. Of course we must learn about Western music and culture, but we should not forget that we also have thousands of years of accumulated indigenous songs and music of our own. I completely agree with Mr. Qiao's methods whereby he has many times gone into the field to investigate. His and my research are similar in the sense that we have both spent many years in the field, living among the people, collecting data, and then comparing them with book knowledge and trying to explain our findings.

We frequently discuss how Chinese and Western cultures should meet. I am reminded here of what Premier Zhou Enlai said that the easiest way for nations to come together and exchange is through art, because no logic or rationalization is involved, only an expression of emotions and sensations, something that all peoples have in common. Take music from other countries, for example. We don't need to understand their language to be able to listen to it and enjoy it, because all peoples express similar feelings. Our cultures may differ, but we can communicate through music and painting. Recently, I read a book by Mr. Chen Zhihua on architecture. He was a student of Liang Sicheng's[8] and photographed the traditional rural houses principally along the middle reaches of the Nanxi River, in Zhejiang province. He lived there for many years in order to collect all these images. I think his research is extremely valuable. Nowadays, all the buildings are high-rises built in the modern Western style. We must ask ourselves: What direction should our Chinese architecture take, and how should our culture blend with Western culture? Can it interact, and can it blend? The next generation must resolve this issue, but how? I come back again to what Premier Zhou said to us in the 1950s that the arts are the channel for contact with different peoples and for communication between different cultural traditions. Back then, he was referring to the relationship between the Han and the ethnic minorities, all within a single country. Now we are talking about the whole world. The easiest way for our Chinese culture to reach out to other cultures and to spread knowledge and understanding of it is through the arts. This is the way we can contribute to world culture. I have invited Mr. Zhou Weizhi here today so that we can recall together why 50 years ago Premier Zhou wanted us to organize that song and dance troupe to visit minority regions. There was some profound thinking behind this, which still applies today, as we consider how our culture can blend with Western culture. This is something your Chinese National Academy of Arts must look into.

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[7] One of the classics of Chinese literature, it is the earliest collection of 500 songs and poems from between the eleventh to the sixth century BC.

[8] 1901–1972, prominent architect, son of Liang Qichao, and one of the earliest proponents of reform in the late Qing dynasty (1644–1911). Liang Sicheng, known as the father of modern Chinese architecture, spent many years researching Chinese traditional architecture and was a strong conservationist of architectural heritage. He was a professor at Tsinghua University and the author of several important works on traditional architecture.

I am very old now, but I can still help to train the next generation. Your institute must also do this by sending the young people out to the field, to live among the populace, and to observe and align their experiences of real life with the knowledge acquired in the university. I came here to say that our artists must be aware of their huge responsibility and be proud to build a future world where science and technology are not the only things, but will also contain and encourage culture and the arts, so that human society will advance both materially and spiritually. Using the physical tools of science and technology, we can build upon the foundations of our traditional culture to develop new arts and strengthen our traditional ones at the same time. We must also dig into and develop our rich cultural resources. My dream is to contribute to the whole world. The Party is calling for the development of the Western Regions, but in this surge forward we must not lose sight of culture and the arts. Fifty years ago, we came to these regions inhabited by the minority peoples to help them build their societies. In those days, art was undeveloped, partly because pressing material needs were unfulfilled and partly because we did not have the trained people. We need more researchers like Qiao Jianzhong and Chen Zhihua, as well as younger ones in their 30s and 40s. They ask me how to fund their field studies, and I say not to worry. As the country's economy grows, there will be funding and a bright future for the next generation.

Just now, some in the audience said that I have wandered from the topic of the Western Regions. I think that much has already been said since they are a hot topic, so I will not add anymore. What I do wish to highlight here, though, is that we Chinese have not paid enough attention to the culture and arts of these regions. However, foreigners have. US President Clinton's first stop when he came to China (1996) was in Xi'an. A Japanese Prime Minister also went to visit Dunhuang and said Japan was willing to provide substantial funding for its preservation. Foreigners are interested in these places because they represent the center of a culture. We claim to be descendants of Yan Di and Huang Di[9] whose civilization was centered in the North West. I mentioned just now that when I was young, the Swedish explorer Sven Hedin came here and did extensive research, later publishing many papers that caused much interest. But we Chinese have neglected this region because of subsequent cultural and economic shifts. In the earliest days, from the Eastern Han (AD 25–220) to the Tang dynasties (AD 618–907), communication and transport took place mainly overland along the Silk Road, which connected many peoples within the country and without. This created great prosperity and turned the Northwest into a center for Chinese culture. However, later economic growth extended southward and eastward to the coast, and water transport proved to be both cheaper and more convenient. Today, things have changed again with railway, air, and road transport providing the Western Regions with a new opportunity to develop. Historically, people have looked down on these regions and it is necessary to correct this deep prejudice. In fact, traditional cultural resources are better preserved here than in the central parts of the country, first because of the dry climate

[9] The Chinese claim to be the descendants of two ancient tribes, headed by Yan Di and Huang Di.

which has kept sites relatively intact and second precisely because of the remoteness and poor communications that have protected them from the influence of modernization. However, if the present opening up is not carried out properly, all these important cultural resources will be destroyed. That is why, in this process, we must call out loud and clear for ancient sites and traditional cultures to be adequately protected. Sacrificing the cultural treasures and riches of thousands of years for the sake of some small immediate economic interest would be losing more than is gained.

Another issue is the importance of the minority peoples, just as it was 50 years ago. We must not look down on them; their cultures have many excellent attributes that we can learn from. We should help them rediscover and make the most of their fine traditions. It's as wrong for the Han to look down on the minority peoples as it is for Westerners to look down on Asians. All peoples and cultures should be treated equally. I hope this institute will organize a team to research the cultural resources of this region. The first step must be to find out as much as possible about them and what is actually out there. We still do not really know, so we need a general overview and a lot of cataloging. After all, Dunhuang was only uncovered quite late, and before that we didn't even know it existed. That's what's called rediscovering and developing.

Last year, I visited Datong and the Yungang Grottoes.[10] The market for coal has been weak recently, so Datong is trying to develop tourism to make up the shortfall. That's a good idea, but if you want people to visit you, you must first of all know about yourself and be able to tell others about it. It turns out that the Japanese have studied Datong extensively and have published a book that I have read. They know more about our heritage than we do! Discovering cultural resources is similar to finding natural ones, it's a process. Li Siguang[11] is a good example of this. When I was in the university, I was told that China had no oil, and I believed it. Later, Li Siguang proposed that China did have oil, and the facts bore him out. So our next step is to find out about what we actually have in the Western Regions, to rediscover our cultural heritage and help to develop the arts and culture here.

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[10] Situated at Datong in the province of Shanxi, dating from the fifth to sixth century. The Yungang Grottoes are one of the largest series of stone grottoes in China: 252 caves containing about 51,000 stone statues representing some of the best Buddhist carving. It is now a World Heritage Site.

[11] 1889–1971. Li was of the Mongol ethnicity, a prominent geologist, the founder of geo-mechanics in China, and an academician of the Chinese Academy of Science.

Chapter 20
Nine Visits to Lanzhou: A Talk

At this meeting today, we are going to discuss the issue of how to understand the role and significance of cultural resources in the process of developing the Western Regions and of how to conserve, develop, and use them. These cultural resources include not only the rich heritage bequeathed to us by our ancestors but also the many existing cultural activities that are continuing to evolve, especially the arts and cultures of the various ethnic peoples living in these regions.

For many years, I have been closely following the Western Regions because I feel that they have been left behind in the overall surge of national development. I wish to do what I can to redress this economic imbalance and help them to catch up. That's why I have visited this region so many times, coming to Lanzhou nine times in the last dozen or so years. My focus has been on economic development, following my motto of "work for the benefit of the people," to raise farmers' incomes. That's why the first place I chose back in the 1980s was Dingxi county, one of the poorest places here. This was the first time I shifted my research from the eastern seaboard to the Western Regions, and the poverty I encountered left a very deep impression on me, a truly profound impression. However, it was also a very one-sided impression, because all I could see was the poverty, and I did not see the wealth of cultural heritage in the county, the vibrant richness of arts and cultural activities among the local ethnic peoples, which were continuing to evolve. Of course, there were good historical reasons for my bias, after all the economy was still very backward, and without improvement there was no point discussing anything else. However, this could not all come from the government, people had to rely on themselves too. So, on the one hand I was right to focus first on productivity for economic development, but on the other, I was late in recognizing the wealth

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On his visit to Gansu province, Prof. Fei met with scholars and academics in Lanzhou to discuss the research project "Conserve, Develop and Use Cultural Resources." Arranged from a recording by Fang Lili, published in *Cultural and Art Studies* (In Chinese, *Wenyi Yanjiu*, 《文艺研究》).

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that also existed. Had I done this earlier, then the conservation, discovery, and use of these resources could have begun sooner.

I remember when I was in middle school I heard about expeditions to Northwest China. There was a Swede named Sven Hedin who organized some of them. At that time, the Northwest seemed very mysterious to me, full of fascinating plants and animals and folkways. I did not understand its importance in the evolution of Chinese culture nor its central position in later cultural development. I was right in my commitment to improving the lot of the people, but now, even after more than two decades, the Western Regions are still pretty backward. The government is quite right to propose the opening up of these regions. However, we cannot make the same mistake I did in the 1980s by forgetting that there are very real, rich cultural resources here. This morning I went to visit the Gansu Museum and was deeply impressed by the amazing array of antiquities. I only saw what has already been unearthed, and there is still a lot more waiting to be discovered. Many of the exhibits were only collected or found in the past century, even just in the past few decades. Many years ago, the Chinese were not interested in these finds, but foreigners were and came to explore here. They stole a lot of valuable relics from us. Well, that's because we did not know the value of our own heritage, we did not know we had so many priceless things, and we were too ignorant. My generation has lived through some very hard times because China has been so poor and had no standing in the world. I was born in 1910, just before the 1911 Revolution.[1] This was a tragic period in our country. All my life I have seen how wretchedly poor the Chinese people have been, so working to give them a better existence has been my life's ambition. I have always believed that productivity must be increased, so that the economy can improve; otherwise, nothing is possible. Take the Gansu Museum, for instance. So many treasures are poorly displayed, and many more are in storage because there is insufficient space. That's because we don't have the money. Our treasures remain unknown and unappreciated. However, in these last 20 years, our economy has developed, farmers' incomes have also increased, and even though the Western Regions are still relatively backward, great changes have occurred here too. In Jiangsu, farmers' incomes are approaching 10,000 yuan, but here they are still lagging behind.

So our priority must still be to increase productivity, but at the same time we must not forget that we also have many cultural riches, which must be protected and conserved as the economy grows, so that we can develop and use them later. You have done a pretty good job of conserving this cultural heritage. Certainly over the last two decades there has been no large-scale destruction or damage. In the early days, many things were stolen or snatched away from us by foreigners, of which Dunhuang is the most blatant example. After liberation in 1949, this did not happen again. It's true that during the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976),[2] traditional culture

[1] The Republican Revolution led by Sun Yat-sen that overthrew the Manchu Qing dynasty and ended 2,000 years of imperial dynastic rule.

[2] The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution was a nationwide political campaign headed by Mao Zedong to counter ideology and policies that he considered "revisionist and bourgeois." Destruction

and relics suffered varying degrees of damage in many places, but it seems overall things were not too bad in Gansu.

In my travels around the province I have the impression that many people, including the farmers, have a high regard for traditional culture. For instance, many rural homes have couplets pasted outside the front door. I met a young man who showed me some calligraphy by his father. It was in a very fine grass script. He said his father was a primary school teacher, which just goes to show how deeply rooted our traditional culture is among ordinary people. This is really wonderful. In Jiangsu province, the farmers are quite well off now, but very few are interested in traditional culture or bother to study it. When I went to Dingxi county here in Gansu, I visited the area around the Zhao River, and I was impressed by the deep attachment of the local peasants for their traditional practices and culture. They had little formal education, but they liked folk arts and enjoyed organizing and joining in cultural activities. Much traditional culture and many artifacts were well preserved. I don't know if this assessment is right, but this was my impression. We need to step up our efforts to inform the public here of the great value of all these things. Of course there are many who have no understanding or appreciation but that's because of ignorance.

This is my ninth visit to Lanzhou but the first time that I am talking about cultural resources. Actually this is quite natural and shows that our thinking has begun to shift as our material circumstances have improved. People start paying attention to nonmaterial things when their lives get better, and they realize that they not only have natural resources but also extremely valuable cultural ones too. When life improves to a certain level, this emotional shift in focus and appreciation occurs too. If people are too poor, it's unlikely they will look upon heritage sites and traditions as a resource, only economic growth makes them understand this.

Cultural resources are defined as anything that is man-made and include all material and nonmaterial things that have evolved in the course of human activity. They are resources just like natural ones, except they are man-made. They have accumulated, bit by bit over the millennia, from earliest human civilization, passed on and built upon, made up of history and the arts and traditions, bequeathed to us by our ancestors. And like natural resources, many of them are nonrenewable. Once destroyed, they are gone forever.

Yesterday, in the museum I saw a great many pieces of early pottery from the Neolithic Age. They are just beautiful. Production was primitive then, and yet the designs and patterns on the pieces, both realistic and abstract, reveal the spiritual richness of that ancient culture, expressing vividly how our forebears perceived and understood the world around them. The many different shaped vessels also indicate how people lived, so they represent not only early pottery but also a kind of culture, an early form of Chinese culture. I knew that early human civilization had stone and pottery implements, but all were just words on a page until I saw the actual objects

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of "old things" was widespread in the early period. It was co-opted by other cliques within the Party, resulting in widespread violence and destruction, and brought the country's economy to a near standstill.

with my own eyes. I was moved by them and now have a new understanding. That's why we must popularize knowledge of history and archaeology, not only through textbooks but also by taking students to visit museums so they can see for themselves and understand our history and the treasures our ancestors have left us. Gansu has already discovered a great many sites and ancient objects, but are there still more to find? It's hard to say. Just look at Dunhuang,[3] which was discovered quite by accident. Monk Wang who was the caretaker had no idea of the value of his charge, which is why he gave away or sold so many national treasures so cheaply to the foreign explorers. That's why we must educate ourselves and others so everyone understands the value of our historical heritage, and then they will consciously protect it. I said just now that I feel traditional culture is deeply rooted in the people of Gansu, in the farmers. We must sustain and nurture this. That is my first point.

My second point is about how to shape attitudes toward cultural resources. We must first educate the public so that they know about the great value of this heritage and how its cultural value can even exceed its economic one. Informing local leaders is particularly important because often the public may not recognize the value of rare artifacts, but they may and can stop any destruction or random disposal. This is particularly important as building steps up here, and more infrastructure is put in. It's quite possible that ancient sites and objects may be unintentionally dug up or damaged, including ancient buildings. We must be particularly on guard against this. For instance, today, you showed me a command token presented to the king of Tibet by the emperor of the Central Plains, which was found by accident on a heap of rubbish. This sort of thing probably happens quite often, but we don't know about it. Often we miss something that's right under our noses because we are too ignorant, rather like what happened in the 1920s when Sven Hedin and other foreign explorers came here and took away a lot of our relics. It was a kind of theft, but they actually helped us discover a lot of things and understand their value, so historically speaking, they played a positive role. Traditional Chinese scholars sat in their libraries and read books, they never ventured out to see for themselves, to experience real life and discover the real nature of things, so they did not know about what went on outside their studies. We must change our traditional ways of doing scholarship and advocate going out into society, into the villages which are full of interesting things waiting for us to uncover. Where does our knowledge come from? I believe not only from books but from practical experience, and that's how we learn. Chinese history too is not learned just from reading books, but from going to see the actual objects in a museum. That's how we will gain a deeper and more complete understanding of it.

Take myself, for instance. I have been exposed to many historical and cultural things, but because I did not study them in depth, I am still ignorant of a great deal. That's why I am now trying to make this up. I said that cultural resources cover many things and that, even as we work to grow the economy, we must not forget how they influence us. We must have a fresh understanding of them and also build upon them to create a new kind of culture that fits with our new life. This is a com-

[3] See previous, chapter footnote no. 5.

plex undertaking. Rapid economic development in the Western world resulted in an overemphasis on the relationship between man and material objects, to the detriment of the relationship between man and man and man and nature. People in the West have realized this and are now working to gradually restore these relationships: man and nature includes the relationship with the natural ecology and natural resources; man and man means the relationship with history and cultural resources.

Such cultural resources include many aspects, but can be summarized as all those things created by humans that have come down to us and continue to evolve. We must use these resources to enrich our lives. Just take music, art, dance, and drama, which all fulfill our emotional needs and convey through the eyes, brain, and mouth all the human emotions. Through our senses we are able to enjoy and accept the expression of subtle moods and feelings. Through art, humans absorb the external world, are stimulated and moved, learn different perspectives, and feel the beauty of nature and human emotions. Discernment and appreciation are mostly learned in childhood and youth, inculcated through the invisible influence of traditional culture. Plainness and beauty are both objective and subjective concepts, but humans always aspire to the beautiful and to spiritual enjoyment. Once people satisfy basic needs of food and clothing, they then aspire to eat and dress better. Eating better is not just a matter of better nutrition, but of better taste, better surroundings, better atmosphere, better tableware, etc. Thus, food becomes a kind of culture, a kind of art. Clearly, humans must focus first on survival and then talk about living. In the past we were focused on survival; now we can begin to shift toward living. Survival and living are not the same things. Living includes food, clothing, shelter, and transportation, and now we have added "learning." We have entered the knowledge economy era when food and clothing are no longer enough, we must continue to expand our understanding of the world, we must learn until the day we die. Rapid change is a feature of the information age, and if we do not learn as much as we can, we will be left behind or become bewildered.

The information age means competition in the realm of knowledge. I call it the "ultra-knowledge age." It's no longer a question of having money or not, it's a question of having knowledge or not. We used to envy those with "monetary assets," and now we envy those with "knowledge assets." The competition is over who has the most wisdom and knowledge and makes the most progress. This is a huge topic and would take too long to discuss, so I won't say anymore here. Actually, a sense of aesthetics is also part of this. One needs both self-cultivation and knowledge to appreciate beauty, to pursue the things of the spirit and mind, and thus to achieve a better quality of life. This will certainly happen as material life gets better and as people demand more. This is human nature, having enough to eat is not enough, the food must taste better, the surroundings must be pleasant; people desire music and dancing and painting. They move to a higher level of appreciation. I belong to a generation that struggled merely to fill its stomach, so I haven't gone too far along the path of culture and the arts, but thanks to some contact, I am now on the threshold. As I said at the Chinese National Academy of Arts the other day, I have friends in the art world, so I have had some contact, mainly in the early days after the founding of the PRC (1949) when I was working with the ethnic minorities. The Party

Central Committee asked me to join a number of missions to the ethnic minority regions. How were we to reach out to the people there? Premier Zhou said we should do so through the arts, so we organized an art troupe. We danced and sang with them, we learned their culture, which made them very happy and they treated us like family. This is what I call appreciating the beauty in others, and this common appreciation got us talking to each other. This is very important because it's the basis to being human. An individual, a people always evolves by first appreciating itself, by finding its own beauty, but then this is not enough, it must also be able to appreciate the beauty in others and understand that beauty. That's how individuals and peoples overcome barriers and how they interact, empathize, and draw closer together. Premier Zhou is the one who created this way of overcoming barriers between ethnic peoples. This still applies in today's world: if we can appreciate the good and beautiful in others, we can build understanding and solidarity between nations and peoples.

In the past, foreigners looked down on us Chinese and considered us ugly because we were shorter, not as robust, and not as shapely. But now look at the Olympics where we are doing pretty well! Actually, the human being is a work of art, and those athletes demonstrate their sports skills and their spirit, all of them an expression of art. As a result, foreigners have changed their opinion of us. Premier Zhou eased Sino-US relations by way of table tennis, so détente became possible. It's actually quite interesting how the arts can ease conflicts and overcome barriers. They are a good means, a good way. In today's globalized world, everyone has to share the same planet, but that does not mean everyone will have the same culture. The criteria for beauty stem from one's own culture and traditions and are determined by one's history. Starting from early Yangshao culture,[4] we have gradually developed our own aesthetics, and our sense of the beautiful is rooted in our civilization. Yet this does not mean we cannot appreciate beauty in other cultures. We can love that too, as we love Western music, for example, or Western fine arts and dancing, even their clothes and way of life, which we can draw upon. But we can't just do that alone, we must display our own fine things so that others can appreciate them too. We now have the possibility to do this, our economy is richer, so our next step is to let more people know about our culture and learn about our beauty and the value of our history and traditions, so that we can break down the barriers between Chinese and Western culture. This means we must build upon the best of Chinese culture and art, build on our heritage, and nurture it into something new. Gansu is a treasure trove of all these "heirlooms"; we must use them and develop them properly so that they serve our nation and country and can be accepted by others all over the world.

I am a scholar of culture. My knowledge of the arts is relatively superficial, but thanks to my work among the ethnic peoples all those years ago, I appreciate the important role the arts play in drawing together different peoples and countries. I also understand the importance of the arts in the development of cultural sensibili-

[4] A Neolithic culture in the middle reaches of the Yellow River that dates back to about 6,000 years ago.

ties in the future. I'm not a researcher of the arts per se and can't go into things in depth, but I can always cheer you on from the sidelines and hope that your research will achieve my aspirations too, which are to remove some of the barriers between world cultures, to bring Chinese and Western cultures into closer contact, so that they may understand and appreciate each other.

To develop and use cultural resources, one needs a foundation of history, culture, and the arts. In this, the Northwest is better endowed than the Southeast because not only does it have ancient sites and cultural heritage but also a strong popular interest and support. Folk dances, folk art, and other cultural activities are varied and rich here, far richer than in the Southeastern regions, and much more colorful than in Hong Kong. And yet, many girls here are intent on aping Hong Kong ways to be fashionable, as if fashion were art! Real art springs from deep cultural roots. Why did US President Clinton make Xi'an his first stop in China in 1996? Because he valued its ancient culture as the capital of so many early dynasties and home of world famous cultural sites, like the Tomb of the Yellow Emperor,[5] the Banpo village,[6] the Qin Terracotta Army,[7] and Empress Wu Zetian's Mausoleum.[8] He recognized the glorious cultures of the ancient Qin (221–206 BC), Han (206 BC–AD 220), and Tang (AD 618–907) dynasties so he chose Xi'an as his first stop. A former Japanese Prime Minister chose Dunhuang as his first stop, demonstrating his knowledge and admiration for the glories of Chinese culture and history. This is all very good. However, we need to identify and investigate all this, and then we must build upon it, not only inheriting and but also creating, as has been done in the drama "Dances of the Silk Road." This will bring a new flowering of our traditional culture and arts. For this, we need to foster more talent and because we are in positions of responsibility, we must create the right conditions and provide the encouragement for such artistic talent to grow.

All of you here are the experts, and I look forward to your comments on how to do this. Though the arts are not my specialty, I really would like to assist in gathering such a group of artists, art historians, theoreticians, and archaeologists together and help them identify their tasks and development goals, so they can create an art and culture that reflects China's new spirit in this twenty-first century of globalization. I think this is very worthwhile. We must first take stock of our cultural resources here so that we know exactly what we have, and then we can explore a path to development. We can't focus only on Dunhuang, it's just one place in Gansu. The foreigners helped us rediscover it, but we can't just stop there, we must now cast our

[5] Ancient mythical tribal leader, claimed ancestor of the Chinese people. Since AD 770, there has been a temple by the burial mound, a scene of state ceremonies held by generations of emperors.

[6] A Neolithic village, dating from 6,000 years ago, typical of Yangshao culture.

[7] Part of the Mausoleum of Emperor Qin Shihuang, it was begun in 246 BC and completed 39 years later. The Terracotta Army is part of the funerary complex guarding the actual mausoleum (unopened) and contains thousands of life-size figures in full armor. It is now a World Heritage Site and sometimes called the Eighth Wonder of the World.

[8] Begun in AD 684 and finished 23 years later during the Tang dynasty, this is a unique tomb containing the remains of two emperors, Gaozong and his empress Wu Zetian. Wu Zetian was the only woman to rule in her own right, under the dynastic name of Zhou.

eyes further afield. There are many cultural resources on the Silk Road just waiting to be discovered. My point is that, first, there are still many treasures we have not unearthed; second, these priceless cultural resources must be conserved, developed, and put to good use; and third, we must raise public awareness of the value of this heritage so that it won't be damaged. We have a bounden duty to say this loudly and clearly to everyone.

Great changes will indisputably take place here over the next 20 years. What we have to think about is the status of Chinese culture during this period of development. At this point, Gansu with all its wonderful relics does not have a decent museum because it's too expensive. Once we have the resources, a good museum will certainly be built. Economic growth will thus also raise levels of culture and lead to its revival. Gansu has a special obligation because its cultural riches have been better preserved thanks to its dry climate. We must look after this place as it proceeds to develop, and we must not forget to conserve, study, and catalog these resources. This is our responsibility as researchers of art and culture.

2001, Lanzhou

Chapter 21
Cultural Tradition and Innovation

Fei: I have read the manuscript of your book *Tradition and Change*.[1] It is excellent and I am sure there will be similar achievements in your future research. As I read it, I was reminded of many things. Let me tell you briefly about them.

China was the earliest country to start producing porcelain, which is why it is also called "china" abroad. In 1981, when I went to Great Britain to receive the Huxley Award from the Royal Anthropological Society, I visited Wedgwood, the oldest and largest porcelain manufacturer in the United Kingdom. The Chairman of the Board was very excited to hear that I came from China and had the factory raise our national flag to welcome me. This was because the first porcelain wares made there in the eighteenth century were based on methods imported from China, so we were their earliest teachers. The Chairman also presented me with a signed copy of a book on the history of Wedgwood and English ceramics. I now pass this volume on to you so that you can learn how pottery evolved in Britain, how Chinese porcelain culture has become an integral part of world culture, and how eighteenth century Chinese porcelain promoted the development of ceramics all over the world.

Fang: Thank you, Mr. Fei, I will certainly read it carefully. Ever since I began looking into the history of Jingdezhen kilns, I have been fascinated by this period. China began exporting ceramic ware in the Tang (AD 618–907) and Song (AD 960–1279) dynasties, reaching a height in the late Ming (1368–1644) and early Qing (1644–1911). The European aristocracy of that time highly prized Jingdezhen porcelain. Many of the wares were not only for daily use but also showcased Chinese culture, with far-reaching effects on world art and aesthetics. For example, the Rococo style that swept through Europe in the eighteenth century was inspired by

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From a transcript of the recorded conversation with Fang Lili, published in Art Research (in Chinese, *Yishu yanjiu*, 《艺术研究》), 2000.

[1] Fang Lili, *Tradition and Change* (in Chinese, *Chuantong yu bianqian*, 《传统与变迁》), Nanchang: Jiangxi People's Publishing House, 2000.

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designs and patterns on Chinese porcelains and had a huge influence on the architecture, furniture, interior decoration, and painting of the period.

Fei: In your book, you go into quite a lot of detail about this, which is important. China has been producing pottery for a very long time, 7,000 years if one traces back to the first painted earthenware. We're still producing it today, so we should create something new, whether in design or aesthetics of a new culture of ceramics. This is what your generation has to do. I divide ceramic ware into two categories: one is for artistic, decorative purposes, and the other is for daily use. Much can be done in the second category. I remember when I was young, we ate out of pottery bowls, and sometimes they broke. Because they were cheap and fragile anyway, the adults would not scold us but would just say "*suisui ping'an*" ("peace all year round," a pun on the sound "*sui*" which means both "break" and "year"). We've been using such bowls everyday since childhood and will probably use them our whole life, so even with science and technology and many new materials around, we still use pottery in our daily tableware. It's the same overseas. After all, food is one of the most important things in life, so eating out of ceramic utensils demonstrates a fascinating connection between pottery, life, and culture.

This reminds me of my experience in the cadre school,[2] when I wanted to cook but had no stove. So I used mud to make one and became very good at it. It occurred to me that human culture probably first started like this, from the need to make a utensil out of mud. I believe that Chinese civilization too has emerged from the earth. When my book *Xiangtu Zhongguo* was translated into English and I was asked about a title, I decided on *From the Soil*,[3] because I believe that Chinese culture originated from the earth. After all, what is culture? It's man using natural dirt to fashion something to use in daily life. Pottery was one of the first things that man made by changing the chemical composition of a natural material. My point is that we must not forget to study these things, because it's not only about artifacts, it's also about culture. Earthen wares have existed in China for nearly 10,000 years if we go back to the earliest pottery. Later porcelain emerged, and now, after centuries of development, we not only have utensils for daily use but beautiful works of art that we all admire.

In your book, you write that over the last few years, a number of handicraft workshops have sprung up in Jingdezhen, specializing in fine art ceramics. This is the continuation of Chinese pottery culture and should be researched. You have done well to record this evolution and trace how these works are a combination of both art and science. It seems to me that you have raised two issues here: one is the man-made techniques of using clay, glaze, and firing materials to produce pottery, and the other is how the artistic vision of the creator is expressed through this medium.

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[2] Short for "May 7th Cadre School," named after Mao Zedong's May 7th 1966 Directive on the need for cadres to maintain close links with ordinary people. Starting in 1968 during the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976), all government institutions, research, and educational organizations established farms to which their staff were sent, to work in the fields, perform other kinds of physical labor, and develop closer ties with the local farmers. In fact, this became a kind of "punishment" for intellectuals, often lasting several years. Later it became a rotational system for all staff. The May 7th Cadre Schools were abolished in 1979.

[3] Fei Xiaotong, *From the Soil*, University of California Press, 1992.

The first issue is a matter of science and technology, and here we can learn from the West. So you point out that the kilns in Jingdezhen no longer burn wood but have switched to natural gas and that temperature is monitored by sophisticated instruments, not by experience or the human eye anymore. The second issue is how new artistic ideas and inspiration can be expressed through these objects.

Fang: Injecting new cultural sensibilities and aesthetics.

Fei: Exactly, ideas and artistic styles for a new era. In your book you have recorded all this and analyzed the causes and effects. This is very valuable, because you are not only following the process of scientific and technical improvement but also tracing how culture is evolving. As we throw more light on the history of Chinese ceramics up to the present day, we gain an understanding of how other aspects of our civilization have evolved, because culture is like a huge net, all parts are linked and affect each other, so we must examine things from a holistic perspective.

Your research is based on your real-life experience, because you have gone to see with your own eyes how ceramics are made and felt for yourself how that environment has evolved. You have not copied it from books. This is very good. By following the life stories of several young artisans who came to Jingdezhen from the villages to find work, and who then later opened their own workshops, you have described all the problems and difficulties they encountered. How did they get here, how did they go from migrant worker to shop owner? These individual stories mirror the growth of a community and of a craft, as well as chart the changes in national policy, the introduction of new techniques, and how these have culturally transformed a town founded on traditional craftsmanship. You've done an excellent job of linking the individual case studies to the broader context.

Your book describes the activities of a group of pottery craftsmen and their artistic creations. Their works are not for daily household use, but for decoration and display. Our standard of living has to reach a certain level before we can have the desire or possibility of possessing such objects. The market for them will grow as people gradually have the money to buy them and start collecting too. Personally, I think Jingdezhen should not only produce such works of fine art but should also develop household ware and construction ceramics. There is a huge demand and market for them. Of course, this will mean mechanized production on a large scale, very different from the small handicraft workshops you describe. However, I also believe that those decorative and artistic pieces also have a bright future, because as I said just now, as our society and national economy improve, they too will become part of our lives. People will want to decorate their homes and surroundings with beautiful objects and will begin collecting high-end works of art. This means that the market for Jingdezhen art ceramics will shift from overseas back to China. People will desire more art in their life, not only in ornamental works but also in household utensils. So I'm saying that house pottery ware can become more artistic too. Why not design and produce small quantities of attractive porcelain sets for daily use? Of course such handcrafted objects will be expensive and only affordable to a minority because the economy will still not have developed enough. I hear you have established a research center for folk kiln ceramic art, so perhaps you could look into this.

Fang: I had two reasons for setting up such a center. My studies of Jingdezhen over the last years have resulted in two books, in which I trace its transformation from a traditional folk kiln center to a modern one. In this process, I felt it would be useful to have a base from which to observe how the new kilns are growing and changing. I feel China is at a turning point, the whole of society is changing very fast, and every year there is something new. For example, last year, just after the Asian Financial Crisis,[4] I returned to the village of Fanjiajing, which I had visited the year before. This is a distribution center for art ceramics and for copies of old-style porcelain. I found that in the short space of one year, a great deal had changed. The shrinking foreign market had compelled the craftsmen to turn to the domestic one, and so the varieties and styles of their work had also changed considerably. Of course, this is just on the superficial level. Probing deeper will reveal many new issues. By following up on the evolution of a community, I would like to uncover the problems that change is bringing to Chinese culture and society as a whole. I want this research to be dynamic and ongoing.

Another reason for the center is to have a platform for scholarly debate for those at home and abroad who are interested in the history and art of such kilns. We would also hope that we could present our new concepts on art and design here. Of course, the issue you raised just now is also on our research agenda.

Fei: I am a very practical person, I want to figure out how your research can really "enrich the people," and how the artisans of Jingdezhen can develop a new kind of artistic thinking or design so that their creations can be appreciated and valued by the public and the market.

Fang: I'm afraid I don't have your wide vision and so far have not given much thought to that. However, our researchers have indeed been pondering how to increase the artistic side of household ceramics and how to make artistic porcelain more serviceable in daily use. We've got a name for this: "ceramic art for living." Our hope is that artists will consider how to make their creations useful and practical.

Fei: That's the second step. When people's standard of living has risen to an annual average of over 10,000 yuan, they will certainly be interested in more artistic daily utensils. At this point, Chinese farmers are only earning on average 3,800 yuan a year, so there is still a long way to go. But things will change very quickly, and when that time comes, the craftsmen of Jingdezhen may discover a whole new horizon. People will not just want a few artistic touches in their daily crockery but have higher aesthetic demands as well. This will encourage a qualitative change in art. I hope you will be able to keep up with the changing times so that you can satisfy this need. Different generations demand different kinds of art. Within these varying demands lie cultural sensibilities, which are a concrete expression of both economic and technological progress. Very interesting research indeed! In today's

[4] The Asian Financial Crisis began in Thailand in 1997 and swept through many Asian countries. Currencies were devalued, stock markets collapsed, trade dropped sharply, and several countries neared economic bankruptcy. The crisis ended in 1999.

globalized world, nothing is isolated, and everything is interlinked, so you must keep a close eye on the trends of world culture and art.

Fang: Yes, you are quite right. In fact, on closer inspection, we discover that the pottery of Jingdezhen has, from quite early times, spread beyond the borders of China. Its products from different historical periods have been found in over 100 countries. Even today, many of the art pieces are made with an eye to foreign markets. Any study of Jingdezhen must take into account the international context and the development of world culture, which creates a demand. Without such a demand there will be no market and nothing to promote further development.

Fei: Quite right, that is the key. Jingdezhen flourished in the eighteenth century because of the overseas demand from the royal houses of Europe. Many bought porcelain directly in China. The British royal family even placed an order for a batch of Jingdezhen ceramics to present to the Russian royals. It's on display in the museum there. There are quite a lot of Qing dynasty ceramics in British museum collections. When I visited the homes of prominent English people, I saw Jingdezhen porcelain that their predecessors had collected. The reason there is so much in Europe is because of its practical everyday use.

Fang: Who made these widely exported pieces in the Ming and Qing dynasties? I believe they came from the "unofficial" or "folk" kilns because the official ones were only produced for the imperial court. The height of this trade came toward the end of the Ming dynasty when many official kilns closed and folk kilns fired large quantities of pottery for commerce and trade. At the time, the market economy also flourished, very similar to what happened in the 1990s, when over 1000 private workshops opened. This is why I am so interested in that historical period. I believe a better understanding of history can help us understand the present, which in turn can deepen our understanding of the past. This is a circular process, which provides mutual reference points, and has led me to write a history titled *Folk Kilns of Jingdezhen*,[5] while I was looking into the present state of the new handicraft industry. Some of my materials came from Chinese and foreign books and documents and some from accounts told me by old artisans who had lived during the last years of the Qing dynasty or in the early Republican Period (after 1911), in which they recalled the old traditions, culture, and handicraft techniques of the folk kilns.

Fei: That is excellent! Every culture has roots, so a real understanding of it requires going back to those beginnings. These will never go away, but will evolve step by step, so it's important to describe them.

Fang: My research methods were very much influenced by your ideas. In the introduction to *Folk Kilns of Jingdezhen*, I quote you:

> The moment artifacts and behaviors that satisfied people in the past can no longer fulfill the needs of the present, they will be discarded, and become dead history. However, saying they are dead is not absolutely correct, because the life or death of culture is not the same as that of a living organism. As long as material or intangible aspects of culture continue to influence and have a function in people's lives, they live on, and even if these functions disappear,

[5] Fang Lili, *Folk Kilns of Jingdezhen* (in Chinese, *Jingdezhen minyao,* 《景德镇民窑》), Beijing: People's Fine Arts Publishing House, 2002.

> the culture can still not be considered dead. That's because though organisms die and cannot be resurrected, in the human world the functions of an artifact or a system can change, or even be revived under different conditions to satisfy totally different needs.[6]

I find this statement very insightful, and so, in the course of my investigations, I paid special attention to which traditions were carried over into our modern 1990s industry and which had disappeared. I asked myself what were the deeper reasons and what they revealed about the real motors and significance of cultural change. I also asked myself my motives for taking down all this history and recording current conditions. Once again, I found inspiration from you and that is, we do this "not just to leave behind some historical data, but to try to discover the causal, dynamic current that links things together, in other words, a living history."[7]

Fei: I have always wanted to write about the life and death of culture, but I probably don't have the energy anymore. I leave that to you! Culture is not the same as a living organism, though it too has its own laws, its own seeds or genes are hidden within. Biology examines the hereditary material within the seeds of an organism. For culture, we must also study its seeds, how to preserve them and retain their healthy genes. Culture must develop under new conditions and adapt to new needs if it is to have any meaning. Seeds are the basis of organic life, without viable ones life cannot go on. Culture too must build on its own foundations: without links to its history and traditions that are its seeds and roots, it will wither away.

Our current understanding must grow out of our history, in other words, the new must grow out of the old. That's what combining tradition and innovation means. How can this be done? Well, innovation needs tradition or it will have no roots; similarly tradition needs innovation, or else it will wither away. Tradition lives on through constant innovation. Anthropology in China can avoid neither history nor tradition. With such an ancient record, many things go back a long way and so that's where we must start to understand them. Looked at like this, it's really quite fascinating.

Fang: I remember that in one of your articles you quoted Malinowski to the effect that the study of history can start from archaeological finds and earliest records and then extend forward in time; similarly, the present can be considered living history and extend back in time and that both methods are complementary and must proceed in parallel.[8] I realized then that what I describe in my book—the old artisans' recollections of former traditions, customs, and pottery-making techniques—are actually a part of living history, which allows us to look back nearly a 1000 years, to when Jingdezhen's folk kilns first fired up. Some of these traditions may disappear only to reappear in later times. So traditions not only link us to the past but also to the future.

Fei: You are quite right. Your research is really quite fascinating. There is history, culture, technology, art, and innovation. It's a comprehensive, cross-disciplinary

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[6] Fei Xiaotong, "On Re-reading the Preface of 'Peasant Life in China'" (in Chinese, *Chongdu Jiangcun jingji xuyan*, 《重读<江村经济·序言>》), in *Peking University Journal*, vol. 4, 1996.

[7] *Ibid*.

[8] *Ibid*.

undertaking. Now you have added a center for fieldwork too. You must keep up the effort.

Fang: Thank you for your encouragement and guidance. Actually I have been following your research methods. Your books *Peasant Life in China* and *Earthbound China*[9] have been my references.

Fei: This is exactly what you must continue to do: know about people, know about society, and know the real, practical things of life. I want to make two points with you today: one is to look outward to the world, and the other is to look backward to the roots of tradition and history. This must extend way back six or seven thousand years ago, to when painted Yangshao pottery first appeared. That was when the shoots of Chinese culture first began to sprout. The most important material culture then was earthenware, so the source and root of Chinese culture lies in them. Let me recommend a book to you, it's called *New Ideas on the Origins of Chinese Civilization*[10] by my friend Su Bingqi. It's excellent and you must read it. Adopting an archaeological perspective, the author looks at the earliest ceramics and describes how the different shapes, decorative patterns, uses, and ways they were made can reveal the process by which the various regional cultural zones first appeared, evolved, met, and blended. This pottery is not just the beginning of culture but also of art. The utensils were used in daily life and also were objects of art. They tell us not only how these early peoples lived but also what techniques they had and what were their artistic tastes. That's why I say that pottery ware is not only for daily use but also a vehicle for culture and history. I hope in your studies you can trace back to the sources of these cultural sensibilities and art and then from this uncover the essence of Chinese culture. Here I mean the depth and breadth of a civilization, its past, and its future. As we innovate today we must continue this process. We discussed just now the links between history, tradition, and innovation. The topic is very important and I hope you will give it greater thought.

We have also discussed how, by combining tradition and innovation, we can create a new culture. This means looking at things dynamically by linking the past with the present to create a new starting point for the future. Yours is one of the books expressing this concept. You have also quite rightly pointed out that to grow, our culture cannot forget its history or its traditions, which must not be allowed to die away. I like the way you put it: if we bury our culture and deprive it of nourishment, it will wither and die, so we must infuse new blood into it to make it grow. And that's innovation. Another point I want to make is the issue of survival: our people must have enough to eat and wear and live a decent life. Once these basic needs are satisfied, they will seek more beauty in their lives, and art will then find a solid foundation. Some places have already reached this level. However, we cannot rely only on the West to provide us with aesthetic and spiritual enjoyment, so Chinese

[9] Fei Xiaotong, in collaboration with Paul Cooper and Margaret Park Redfield, University of Chicago Press, 1945. Chinese language version *Yunnan San Cun* (《云南三村》), translated by Fei Xiaotong in collaboration with Zhang Zhiyi, Tianjin People's Press, 1990.

[10] In Chinese, *Zhongguo wenming qiyuan xin tan* (《中国文明起源新探》), Beijing: Commercial Press, 1997.

artists must recognize this growing need and these prospects to create artifacts and daily objects that are pleasing and appealing to our people. Artists should personally go to find out what people need and want; at the same time they can also spread their creative ideas and guide the public toward more refined artistic tastes.

Art can be divided into fine art for the elite and popular art for everyone else. The former is for a minority of collectors and museums because it's too expensive for ordinary people. But what about art for the general public? Shouldn't artists take an interest in that too? I believe we should not forget this.

Fang: Just as you pointed out, there are two kinds of art. One is very much an individual, personal creation, serving only a few collectors or for a museum. Then there is the other kind, items designed for daily life, attractive and useful, which can be produced in large quantities for the market. Life is multilayered, and artists should try to satisfy people with different needs. Of course, the public is very important.

Fei: All culture has its source among ordinary folks, and so it rightfully belongs to them. Of course, out of this general popular art, an elite form also emerges. It's a question of large traditions and smaller ones, and we must be clear about how they interrelate.

Fang: In my book I describe the former potters of Jingdezhen, the ordinary craftsmen and artisans at the basic level of cultural creativity. Many might look down on them for having little formal training and artistic sophistication, and yet it was they who created the distinctive style that became so popular in Europe in the eighteenth century and that spread all over the world. Their originality and vigorous ceramic art was much admired by such masters as Picasso, Gauguin, and Matisse.

Fei: Indeed it was. Ordinary craftsmen are often the real creators of art, yet history frequently does not recognize them or the culture they have created. This is what I mean by large and small traditions and popular and elite art. I think you must clarify this point further. It could be the subject of a useful and instructive paper that would propose definitions of culture. I see two levels. We cannot only focus on one. Since all art draws inspiration from life and elite art grows out of popular art, without economic development and the flowering of popular art, there will be no elite art either. I give you a copy of the transcript of a conversation I had with Mr. Li Yiyuan called "Chinese Culture and Social Anthropology in the New Century"[11] in which we discuss the issues of large and small cultures and popular and elite cultures. Take a look at it.

Today we have actually discussed two topics, one is the relation between tradition and innovation and the other the link between life and art. Life is about survival, once that is assured, there comes the pursuit of beauty. I am very happy to see that we Chinese have a much better life now and that some people have already reached a certain level of comfort. However, a number of worrying phenomena have emerged. There are some who spend their newfound wealth on excessive wining and dining, gambling, and profligacy. They are extravagant and wasteful. This is

[11] See Chap. 5.

where art should play a role. Artists must keep up with the times by directly experiencing people's lives and by understanding their deeper needs to provide a more spiritual side to life. This is what I mean by "life with more art." We have two extremes today, some are already quite well off, but many are not, and you must not forget them.

It's important that you write about how art has its source among the people and is rightfully theirs and that artists must remember this. Of course artists can create for those who already have more means and through works of art elevate their cultural tastes and enrich the life of the mind and spirit. But here comes my next question: now they are rich, what then? If these wealthy individuals can become interested in the beautiful things of life, in art and culture, and use their money to collect art or sponsor cultural activities, then the level of cultural appreciation of the general Chinese public will rise, and national arts will flower. Artists can show these wealthy people a whole new way to live and spend their money in the pursuit of the beautiful, which is what I mean by "life with more art."

I think that's all we have time for today. I have given you two books and one article, which I hope will be useful for your research. One book is on the history of English porcelain, which I hope will widen your perspective from the home culture to the world and the future, and the other is about the source of our own Chinese culture, which hopefully will give you some insights into the traditions, the history, and hence the essence of Chinese civilization. In this way, while tracing back to our roots, you can also gaze into the future and incorporate both into your research.

Fang: Thank you so much for the books and for your guidance. I will certainly continue to follow your advice. Before coming to Peking University, I had already read many of your works and had begun my fieldwork in Jingdezhen. My greatest wish was to meet you and be guided by you, which is why, after I received my doctorate from the Central Academy of Craft Art,[12] I signed up for postdoctoral work at the Institute of Sociology and Anthropology you set up here at Peking University. That's when I was finally able to benefit directly from your advice. The data for both my books had already been collected before I came to Peking University, but I finished writing them during my 2 years here. So they have been written directly under your influence and guidance. This second book *Tradition and Change* is my dissertation for the postdoc, and you kindly read through the manuscript last year and made many very valuable comments. This time, you have once again taken the time to read it through and to discuss it with me. I can't tell you how honored and grateful I am, and I hope there will be other opportunities like this.

January 15, 1999

[12] Incorporated into Tsinghua University in 1999.

Chapter 22
Cultural Considerations on the Opening of the Western Regions

Fei: I have read your research proposal *Preserving, Developing and Using the Cultural Resources of the Western Regions to Revive their Glorious Culture and Art* which you are going to submit for approval. They are both well written and full of new ideas. I think the opening up of the Western Regions should be a three-dimensional undertaking. By this I mean it should include not only economic development but also the protection of natural and cultural resources and their development and use. There is now much more general awareness of these issues and action is being taken. I highly approve. However, there are not that many people who have a truly deep understanding of protecting and using of cultural resources, and at this point, there is no one specifically researching these issues. I think this work should be included in the general strategy for the Western Regions. So your proposal is extremely important, on a par with economic development and protection of the natural environment. All these aspects should be integrated and advance in parallel; in other words, social progress should include everything. Economic development alone, without better ecological protection, promotion of art and culture, and more education, could actually be destructive and a step backward. That's why I say the policy for the Western Regions should be a holistic, integrated one, encompassing both economic prosperity, rational ecological balance and growth, and blossoming of art and culture.

Fang: The leaders of my institute have taken this whole issue very seriously. They have organized high-level hearings and invited specialists to speak. There have been some excellent proposals. Subsequently, it was decided that I would head

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X. Fei, *Globalization and Cultural Self-Awareness*, China Academic Library,
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this project and work with key members of our institute and other related organizations. We would like to invite you to be our academic advisor.

Fei: I'm too old to do anything really practical, but I can certainly comment and share ideas. Anyway, I have a duty too to contribute to the opening of the Western Regions.

Fang: For a long time, Chinese art institutions have focused on researching art itself, which is completely different from sociology and anthropology. However, if our study now of the cultural resources of the Western Regions is to have any depth and breadth at all, it must be combined with sociology and anthropology. For a comprehensive study of these cultural resources, we must bring in sociology, anthropology, archaeology, history, and ethnic studies. This is how we will open up a whole new path for academic research and also keep up with the new requirements of an evolving situation. That is why we really need you to be our teacher and guide.

Fei: You are quite right, cross-disciplinary research is the way of the future. So you should be bold, since all paths are trodden out by those who dare to explore. Now, why don't you tell me about how you see the opening up of the Western Regions.

Fang: I do have some ongoing concerns. All the different human cultures have evolved gradually over thousands, even tens of thousands, of years. They have things in common, but each also possesses highly distinctive and even unique features. The experiences and wisdom of each culture and the information stored in its memory cannot be totally replaced by any other. Thanks to their geographical location and human environments, our Western Regions have managed to preserve many different cultures in relatively untouched forms, rather like, in the biological sense, a source of genetic diversity that has not been damaged. We see in these Regions examples of all the various stages of civilization that mankind has gone through in the course of development, and they continue to exist to this day, for example, the nomadic Mongolian Steppe culture, which is dynamic, combative,, and even expansionist; the agrarian Loess culture in western and northern Shaanxi which is settled, conservative, and inward looking; and then there is the High Plateau culture of the Yunnan and Guizhou mountains, which remains relatively primitive because of remoteness and which in places preserves mankind's earliest hunting, fishing, and gathering practices. Many of these civilizations have long since vanished in developed countries, but they remain intact in certain parts of our Western Regions. We must not turn up our noses at them, for they are cultural riches that belong to all mankind. That's why we must treasure them and refrain from thoughtlessly destroying them. This is one of my concerns.

Fei: They are treasures indeed! Promoting economic development is perfectly correct, but we must not forget that we possess these treasures, a precious legacy passed down to us through the millennia. This is an extremely important resource. The vast geographical expanse of these regions together with their long history has produced many different ethnic groups and outstanding individuals who, together, have created these cultural and human resources. I call them a resource because not

only must they be preserved, they can also be developed and used effectively under new historical conditions. In this surge to develop the Western Regions, we must indeed spur their economies and enrich their markets so that they equal or even better other parts of China. However, at the same time, we must preserve the balance of their natural and cultural ecologies. And that's not enough; we must restore and rebuild those environments that have been damaged and even rediscover those that have been lost. Natural and cultural environments are resources; they are riches that are hard to artificially recreate. We must have a clear understanding about this.

Fang: There are many experts studying how to conserve as well as make use of the natural resources and ecologies of the Western Regions. This has received a lot of attention and support from national authorities. However, cultural resources and environments have not received the attention they deserve.

Fei: Once we understand their importance, we can do something. Getting everyone to pay attention and reach a consensus is where all of you come in. On-site studies, research, and then publishing your results and making them widely known will spread the word that economic prosperity of the regions must go hand in hand with an expansion of their cultures and arts.

Indeed these areas have a great deal for us to explore, examine, and discover. The earliest signs of our civilization are here: in the Guanzhong Basin, fossils of skull bones of the Lantian Man have been unearthed, dating back to 650,000–850,000 years ago; cranial fossils of Dali Man dating back 100,000–200,000 years ago also come from this region. And the Banpo village and Jiangzhai sites from 6,000 years ago are the best-preserved examples discovered so far of Neolithic Yangshao culture in the Yellow River basin. Some of our most glorious art comes from these parts and flowered here, like the colored glazed pottery of Gansu, Qinghai, and Shaanxi provinces, the Buddhist art and culture of Dunhuang (in Gansu), and the petroglyphs and rock paintings of Xinjiang and Yunnan. What's more, still in these regions, there are some forms of art and culture that can be traced back to very ancient totem worship, such as talismans representing sacred earliest ancestors, symbolic depictions of the origin of man and fertility, as well as many images illustrating ancient stories, myths, and legends. Then there are the folk music and dances that have evolved from primitive holy and shamanistic practices. We can find here the sources of practically all Chinese art, music, dance, even drama, poetry, and song. The Western Regions have been home to Han and other ethnic cultures, since most of China's minority peoples live here, and so we can see how these cultures have met and blended yet also evolved separately through time and space to finally achieve diversity within integration.

During the Western Han dynasty (206–223 BC), the rulers opened the Silk Road that stretched from Chang'an (the capital) across the Eurasian continent, spreading China's silk culture through Turpan and to Southeast Asia and westward to Persia and Rome. And back along this route came Buddhism from India. Buddhism has had a huge influence on Chinese civilization; its introduction was the first phase in Western cultural influences. The five centuries (AD 220–907), from the Wei, Jin,

and Northern and Southern dynasties up until the Tang and even later to the Song (960–1279), were key to the formation of traditional Chinese culture. Chen Yinque[1] has written a lot about this, and I strongly recommend you read him.

Fang: Prior to the ninth century, the political and economic center of China was situated mainly here in the northwest, and most economic development was in this region too. However, over the next 1000 years, this changed as the lands south of the Yangtze River were settled, and its middle and lower reaches gradually became the economic hub of the empire. In the early tenth century, the Tang dynasty collapsed, and the entire western regions became engulfed in war, turmoil, and instability. From the Five Dynasties (907–960) up to the Northern Song (960–1127), through the Liao (907–1125), Western Xia (1038–1227), Yuan (1271–1368), Ming (1368–1644), and Qing (1636–1911) dynasties, the empire went through a series of territorial divisions and mergers, as armies fought across the northern and western regions with only relatively short periods of peace in between. This was a time when ethnic groups both intermingled and confronted each other. The region's economies gradually disintegrated and their cultures lost dominance. The prosperity and role of the overland Silk Road eventually faded as a result of the continuous warfare and also because of the rise of the maritime Silk Road. Former big cities with their rich commerce and bustling markets shrank to mere military outposts charged with defending the northwestern and southwestern frontiers.

Fei: Even so, we cannot say these cultures are not important. It is more that our understanding of them now is so shallow because we have considered them to be outside the mainstream and have not bothered to look into them, and that's why we know so little about them. Now that we wish to develop these cultural resources, we must get to know them again, understand, and probe them. Over the years, people have already done much work examining them from the perspectives of archaeology, anthropology, ethnic studies, and the fine arts. All this research is very important and has laid a good basis for our further study today. However, most of it has focused principally on recording historical facts, observation, and description and has lacked a deeper cultural theoretical overview and in-depth research. The question now is how to adapt many of the research methods of sociology, anthropology, ethnic studies, and history to the study of the arts, so that the traditional single-discipline, stand-alone project becomes part of a larger more comprehensive investigation. What you must do today is pursue cross-disciplinary, multidisciplinary research, and theory building, for example, placing art in a specific historical and sociological context so that the investigation is not just into the history of the art form itself but also into how history and society have affected it. This is very different from pure art history that only examines how the art itself has evolved. Instead, here, one is examining the influences of changing society over time. I believe up until now, we have not done very much of this kind of research.

[1] 1890–1969, prominent classical scholar, historian, and linguist proficient in some 20 languages, author of many important works on classical Chinese history and political systems, and academician of the Academia Sinica.

Fang: Preserving, developing, and using the cultural resources of the Western Regions are something totally new that no one has done before. Anything new requires fresh vision and novel methods. We are compelled to go beyond former methods of studying art, which used to focus only on the artwork itself, such as its forms of expression, language, and symbols. The process of creation; the people behind the art, including their artistic activities; and the sociocultural features of a specific society were rarely studied. This is a huge gap in art anthropology, which our research will help to fill. Internationally, there are very few such research papers, while in China there are none at all. So our research project is cutting edge and breaking a new academic ground. Another departure from previous studies is that it is going to be extremely practical. We are leaving our offices, and going out into the field, into society so that our theories can be closely linked with all the changes that are taking place on the ground. Just as you said, this new methodology requires interdisciplinary study to bring in perspectives from history, archaeology, anthropology, sociology, and ethnic studies. We will need to be very innovative in both our research processes and methods as we will no doubt encounter many difficulties, but we will work to overcome them.

However, we are going to need funding. Social science research does not get much funding from national institutions. I know our institute will help us as much as it can, but I also know that the Chinese National Academy of Arts has a very tight budget.

Fei: Well, funding is not the main thing. As long as your research has genuine significance and can truly contribute to the overall development of the economy and culture of the Western Regions, the government will definitely support it. This is a huge project, not something that just a couple of people can carry out, and you will need a large number of committed scholars to work on it together. The Chinese National Academy of Arts has a great advantage here, because it employs many able researchers in a lot of different artistic fields. No other place can match it. Anyway, this project is a long-term one; it will take more than just a few days or months or even years to complete. It's going to take a long time. For some people, it may even become their life's work.

I think you could proceed in a number of steps. First, you need to grasp the full developmental history of the region. Once you have a good understanding of that, you will need to select a number of typical places for in-depth field study. You will need to spend some time there to really probe deeply, and then these places can be your research samples. You must see with your eyes and experience things with your heart. I'm afraid I don't have the energy to do this kind of long-term fieldwork anymore. This will be up to all of you now.

Fang: You could still go to some more accessible places for some short-term study.

Fei: Next month I plan to visit a couple of places to look around, and I hope to talk to people about the importance of preserving, developing, and using cultural resources. I want to lay out the concepts and their significance, because a lot people are still not sufficiently aware of them.

Fang: I have been pondering a paradox for some time now. As the economy advances, traditional art and culture will inevitably be impacted. So how should we go about conserving them? After all, we can't stop them evolving, neither can we allow them to become totally overwhelmed by the massive new culture so as to lose their distinctive character. What would you say about this?

Fei: In the newest issue of *Literature and Arts Studies*, I read an article by Li Zehou[2] in which he presented some very interesting ideas. He proposed a "creative transformation" for indigenous and traditional cultures as they experience the shocks of integrated economic development, that is, creative growth on the basis of the traditional. The globalized, integrated economy will give us all new lifestyles and new cultural perspectives, but this does not mean the best of our traditions should totally disappear. Our job is to extract the best, make everyone aware of our many valuable traditions that ought to be preserved, and then deliberately build on them and carry them forward. This is what I call cultural self-awareness, a state of knowing oneself.

At this point, we ourselves are still not clear what resources or riches we possess. People need time to learn about different resources. For instance, it has taken a long gradual process to learn about natural gas, oil, solar power, nuclear power, etc. It's the same for cultural resources. A first step is to deliberately look for, uncover, and gradually understand all the assets that we didn't know we had, so we know what there is to study. This means looking back into our history and realizing that the cultures of the Western Regions have been eclipsed by Han-centrism and by West-centrism, so that no one examines or understands them anymore. The result is we only talk about the Han people, when in fact it was not the only ethnic group here in these regions; or we only talk about the strength of Western culture and ignore that of indigenous ones. That's why the many cultural resources of this huge area have been hidden. These regions are inhabited by many different ethnic groups, so we must recognize this diversity and also that different natural and human environments have created distinctive cultures which are just as ancient, important, and valuable as the Han's. It's essential that we fully recognize this fact.

Another objective of our study and research is to tell everyone about how these traditional ethnic cultures are also changing and evolving under the new historical and social conditions and how we must preserve and continue their best traditions. We also have a responsibility to warn everyone that we must not allow these diverse cultural resources to be washed away or drowned by the great tidal wave of globalization and cultural integration.

Next month I plan to go to Shaanxi and Gansu for some fieldwork. If you have time, why not come with me, and on the way we can continue this conversation.

Fang: Professor, I would be thrilled to have this opportunity to learn from you!

Fei: Well, I think that's about all we have time for today.

Fang: Thank you for talking with me, Professor Fei. You have given me much food for thought.

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[2] Li Zehou, "Culture and Arts of China and the West at the Turn of the Century" (In Chinese, *Shiji zhijiao de zhong xi wenhua he yishu*, 《世纪之交的中西文化和艺术》), in *Literature and Arts Studies*, 2000, no. 2.

Chapter 23
From the People

Zhou Yuning (reporter from the *Arts Daily*): Thank you very much, Professor Fei, for agreeing to this interview today. I would like to ask you how you view issues in Chinese culture as we enter the new millennium, a time of great changes both globally and domestically. Of course this is a very broad topic, but I think can we start off by looking at some specifics. What is your assessment of culture today? I've heard that at several meetings, you have pointed out that we are living in an overly materialistic age and that you hope that a new period will begin, where people will be more preoccupied with the things of the mind and spirit, with artistic expression and less with material gratification.

Fei Xiaotong: When you look all over the world today, there are many people whose basic living and cultural needs are pretty much satisfied. Of course, to be more accurate, there are still a great many people who are still not able to fulfill these basic needs. In China today, a certain proportion of the population, ourselves included, have sufficient life resources, such as food, clothing, and transportation. So what do we need next? What do we need on the nonmaterial side?

In theory, we should have many ways and forms of fulfilling our spiritual needs. However, at this point things are still somewhat confused. One current social manifestation of this need is the very popular trend of "celebrity worship." This is not just young people's desire to be fashionable, it also shows they crave something for the spirit. So far, there has not been much progress in finding ways to satisfy this hunger. Actually, this is more your problem than mine. People in artistic and literary circles should really look into this general social need for something more spiritual. The problem is now quite clear: now that basic subsistence is no longer an issue, a certain proportion of the public, especially the youth, needs new goals in life. Just as someone has to provide the means to live decently, now new resources must be provided to satisfy this search for things of the mind and spirit, and this is up to artists and writers.

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Fang Lili: Professor Fei means the consumption of cultural intangibles.

Fei: What are required are cultural and artistic forms that are widely accepted and can fill a spiritual need. These are varied, ranging from art and literature, to pictures and images, to everyday objects. We can already observe and feel this great thirst from the public, but we still cannot see the creativity that is going to satisfy it, and no one is doing anything. There is a strong popular desire for art and literature, but our cultural workers still do not appreciate the importance of their work to ordinary people.

Fang: You mean people's needs have outpaced creativity.

Fei: Our cultural workers have not looked into what the public wants, what sort of things appeal to it. All they are doing is aping the West. This is really not a healthy direction, but I don't have anything else to suggest. I just feel that we need to draw upon our own cultural traditions to create things that are more suited to Chinese spiritual needs than what Western culture can offer. There are a lot of aspects to tap into, but very few people are actually studying them. After all, we have a culture that is thousands of years old containing a wealth of content that could fulfill Chinese people's spiritual needs, particularly when it comes to the intricacies of personal relationships, the art of living, and the artistic life. Those in cultural circles should start from really understanding the essence of Chinese civilization and what we already have. As I said just now, we must find the expressive forms, images, and sounds that appeal to our people, and we need works of art and literature that must carry on from our own heritage and yet also resonate with the new spirit of the times. There must be a group of people who immerse themselves in this.

China Central Television has started a new program called "Folk China." This is a really good idea, to go deep into the life of the people to uncover artistic forms that portray new content in popular and appealing ways. I'm not an artist myself, but I really appreciate art and literature.

Zhou: What sort of things do you like?

Fang: Professor Fei is a fine essayist and writes good poetry too. His calligraphy is even better, and he used to paint. He has a great artistic sense.

Fei: But this has largely remained uncultivated, and now it's too late for me. Many things are needed to nurture artistic talent. Our cultural workers can build on what they already have to satisfy popular needs, but a general direction is also required. This is what we should be studying and discussing. As I see it, this direction should combine tradition with innovation, that is, on the basis of the past, absorb the new and explore the future.

Fang: The culture of the future needs good soil to grow.

Fei: Japan has done rather well in building on its heritage. Artistic forms that had been lost have been rediscovered and put on display. Here in China, some art has learned a lot from the West, but has failed to integrate our own traditions and has little national flavor. At least, I have not seen many. Recently I watched Luo Yusheng

on TV singing traditional folk *dagu*.[1] She has lots of new content in her numbers, and audiences really like her. I think she is heading in the right direction, but there are very few who wish to carry on her art.

Fang: You're saying that our traditional folk art forms and culture must not be lost.

Fei: We used to sing the songs from *The White-Haired Girl*[2] which I think was the right way to go. But now, this sort of artistic creation has stalled, and instead all the stars imitate the Hong Kong style. This is what I mean by needing an artistic direction. We are not training people or giving them opportunities. Here, we need you media people to join in the search for a direction of artistic creation. Actually Chairman Mao already pointed this out very clearly. As I understand him, he meant that we cannot abandon our heritage, but must build something new from it.

Zhou: At a time when the general trend is toward globalization, you are proposing that we hold on to our traditions and that we defend our indigenous culture. How can we preserve our national heritage and still remain in step with trends in modern science and technology, economics, and culture? Some scholars have predicted that the twenty-first century will be a Chinese cultural century, that Chinese culture will lead the global trend. How do you see this?

Fei: Chinese culture must renew itself, and we certainly need new content to be part of world culture. I don't think we should lead world culture, we should just be one of many cultures, because we have our own distinctive civilization.

Fang: So the West shouldn't lead us, and we shouldn't lead the West.

Fei: There are a lot of us, hundreds of millions, and we can't all ape Hong Kong stars. In the age of Mao Zedong, we began to have our own new culture, and though I am not an artist, I watched what was going on, and I believed it was a good direction. But now, all that has stopped, and no new talent has emerged. We are still watching the familiar celebrities of our youth, but they are all passing on, and no new ones have come forth, which means there is no artistic mainstream. It doesn't mean there is no talent, there is, but it has not been nurtured or encouraged or given the opportunities. Do you see what I mean?

Zhou: Yes, I do. You're saying that no new generation of artists has appeared because we have not created the opportunities or environment for them.

Fei: Quite right. We must show them our appreciation, make them known, give them an audience, and let the public see them. That's your job as the media.

Fang: We must nurture artists who create typical Chinese work.

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[1] *Dagu* is a traditional form of Chinese performing arts, popular in North China. Accompanied by a three-stringed instrument, the performer beats a small drum and sings verses of 7–10 characters long.

[2] In 1945, the Lu Xun Academy of Arts in Yan'an created an opera based on folk melodies and singing styles of Shaanxi province. It tells the story of a young girl forced by the local landlord to hide in the mountains where her hair turns white from suffering. She is eventually rescued by her lover.

Fei: Life is so much better nowadays. There are daily TV programs, but it's rare to see artists with a genuine Chinese style. Most art today does not resonate with ordinary folk. This is partly because the media has not done what it should, and you have not fulfilled your responsibility. Everyday you talk about Mao Zedong's ideas about art and literature,[3] but in fact a lot of what is produced today does not really appeal to the public.

Fang: You think that there are too few works of art and actors with a typical national style, right?

Fei: Right, because they don't mix with ordinary folk.

Fang: They are divorced from them.

Fei: From the people and back to the people. Don't look to Hollywood. The culture of Hollywood is not Chinese culture. Of course, we need to adopt their techniques and technology as much as possible, but to create our own national culture that appeals to our own tastes. But this does not seem to be fashionable these days. Take Suzhou *pingtan*.[4] When I was young you could hear a performance anywhere in town, but now, life has improved and no one pays any attention anymore.

Fang: They're all watching TV.

Fei: Television rarely shows this art form either. Everyday they broadcast "the same song" and most of it is Hong Kong-style culture. When it comes to singing, their technique may be better than in the old days, but there is no national flavor to their songs. Of course, maybe the public is changing too, I don't really know, no one has looked into whether or not traditional tastes are changing. I certainly don't know, probably because I'm too old! Anyway, from my generation's point of view, there are no new stars today who can truly represent the times. None. Maybe it's just my age, my own cultural preferences. That's why I can't keep up with the times!

Zhou: No, no, what you say is very important and I think could be quite instructive to our younger cultural workers.

Fei: Just some thoughts of someone from the older generation. We feel that so far nobody who can represent the times has emerged yet. Maybe that's because things have changed so much in the past few years! I certainly can't keep up and still write in the same old way.

Zhou: You have the clear, precise style of a master. It's inimitable.

Fei: But maybe less and less people like it.

Zhou: Not necessarily. Lots of young people like to read your work. Everyone knows about you, which is why today I'm here to ask you about art and culture. I would like you to comment on the call for a "renaissance of Chinese culture," which was proposed a while ago by *Arts Daily*. Reinvigoration of the Chinese nation also means an artistic renaissance, don't you think?

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[3] Mao Zedong believed that art and literature has a class character and should first and foremost serve the working people. It should spring from and closely reflect their lives and reality.

[4] Two forms of storytelling popular in the region around Suzhou. *Pinghua* is performed by a single performer, telling stirring tales of ancient battles and warriors. *Tanci* is performed by two people playing two different kinds of stringed instruments. They sing in a duet form, telling folk and love stories.

Fei: A renaissance is created by people, by individuals who play specific roles, who are stars, who are typical of their time. The term "stars" is new, we used to say such people were "representative." They must have a distinctive style, acceptable and pleasing to the public. It's clear that such a style must come from our folk traditions.

My own personal style is typical of an intellectual of my particular generation. In those days, anyone with a middle school or university education could read and understand me, and they liked what I wrote because I didn't put on literary airs. I was easy to understand, and that's what made my writing different. One must not forget how ordinary people are, and one must use their language to talk about things they wish to know; that's how to have an appreciative audience. The same applies to art. Coming back to Suzhou *pingtan*, there have been a few star performers, but then without much encouragement, creativity has stalled, and there has been nothing new, so now we're still singing about *Liang Shanbo and Zhu Yingtai*.[5]

Fang: To survive, the art must keep up with the times.

Fei: Any development needs talent. In these times of great change, no new, real representative figures have appeared yet. Of course, this is just an old man's opinion, not necessarily right.

Zhou: I recall your saying in the past conversations that you felt our material and spiritual worlds were out of step. That is, our cultural development has not kept up with the times and that those working in the social sciences and humanities, our researchers, including our artists have not been able to create anything new.

Fei: That's correct.

Zhou: So if we wish to create a new set of spiritual and cultural values that are in step with our times, what should our artists or those of us in the social sciences do first?

Fei: First you must take the issue seriously and treat it as your life's work, not merely just a means to an end. Those of my generation pursued knowledge not for money but for other reasons: we did it because it was right, good, and our responsibility. It's a question of values, and that's what a person should aspire to. These days we don't have to worry about our next meal or our survival, so we need a life of the spirit and mind too.

Zhou: So what should we aspire to in this life of the mind?

Fei: A better worldview, a better world.

Zhou: You are a strong advocate of art. As part of your spiritual aspirations, your ideal is a world containing the arts and the life of the mind, where there is no need for material ostentatiousness or extravagance. How do you think we can get closer to this goal, this new world?

Fei: We need people to stand up for it, to strongly advocate it. You media should open up to new personalities, because without them there is no art. We need good journals. I used to look forward to certain journals and to certain columns in them, but now there are fewer and fewer things I really want to read. A journal needs an

[5] A well-known tragic love story from the Eastern Jin dynasty (317–420). Also sometimes called *The Butterfly Lovers* or *The Eastern Romeo and Juliet*.

eager readership to be successful. The newspapers are not appealing either. If your *Arts Daily* can have readers impatiently waiting for your next issue, then you can consider yourself truly successful. This is not easy. Every country in each period of its history has always had a number of journals that really appeal to people.

Zhou: You once published an article in the journal *Dushu*, in which you said that China had never experienced a renaissance and that this had affected our culture. Do you think we need to make this up?

Fei: Our renaissance was aborted. It never matured, and there was no high tide or blossoming of passion or culture.

Fang: Can't we do it now?

Fei: We had the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976) that wrecked everything. That was the tide, and it was destructive. There has been no constructive tide yet.

Zhou: Do you think it can still happen?

Fei: This sort of thing is spontaneous, born from history; it's not artificially constructed or decided. If it comes, it comes. I imagine China will have such a surge. The economic high tide is already here. These last 2 years have been pretty good, and I was out in the provinces and I saw what was happening.

Fang: So the cultural surge should be next?

Fei: Should be.

Fang: Otherwise this society will be out of balance.

Fei: We're still not preparing enough for this coming high tide. We need people. Young people today don't seem to have as much creative energy as we did back then. Many of them go abroad.

Zhou: Do you think that young people educated in the West will push China's cultural development forward when they come back?

Fei: So far I have not seen much particularly outstanding talent, at least I have not met any such individual, nor have I seen a new generation emerge. These things can't be forced, if they come they come, if not, there's nothing much one can do.

Zhou: We now talk about nurturing the people who are taking our country into the next century. You have spoken about our artists and writers. From the perspective of our national culture, what should we do for this talent to emerge?

Fei: That's a huge question, a question of direction that the Party will have to decide. Economic development is the focus at this point. This is our duty; we must first build up our foundation. Once that is in place, we need a cultural surge, and we should start preparing now, because we are looking toward the future. This is not something any single individual can do; it must spring naturally from people's hearts.

Zhou: Thank you again for talking to me.

September 3, 2002

My Early Years

A Conversation with Fei Xiaotong[1]

Fang: Many people want to know about how you came to your ideas and theories. I'm sure they have a lot to do with your early years.

Fei: The most important goal of my life has been to understand China, change China, and give my knowledge back to the people of China. Though I have struggled to do this, to this day I can't really say that I know a great deal about Chinese culture or that I am completely clear about the Chinese condition. A major turning point was my coming to Beijing to study when I was 20. That's when I first began my studies of society and culture, and that has been my focus ever since.

Fang: What is your understanding of the "human world"? How do we, as individuals, and the formation of culture relate to it?

Fei: As I see it, after we are born we live within a society and a culture. But these are not constructed by one individual, they are a legacy from those who have come before, and we learn how to live within them. Human beings are part of the natural world, but our way of living, our thinking, and our understanding of it are given to us by previous generations from whom we learn. Confucius said, "Learning is imitating *(xue er xi zhi)*": learning is following what others have already determined. New culture comes from learning and changing in the process; sometimes strange things emerge, sometimes there are transformations and creations which alter the old forms. Cultural change and evolution come out of learning from what those who came before us have done. I now realize that my life's research has been: how do people learn? How have the Chinese people developed through this process of learning?

Each person's life is rooted in his/her own culture and history. An individual changes continuously through learning, and this is what happened to me. Sometimes

[1] Based on notes by Fang Lili, published in *Ethnic Arts Quarterly* (*Minzu yishu*,《民族艺术》), 2002.

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I did not "learn" very well, which produced something new, and things changed. Just as culture takes many forms, so a person can make fresh choices in the course of learning.

Fang: You have lived through the whole of this century and witnessed the many social changes and developments of Chinese society. We can say that most of your childhood was during a tumultuous period in China's history, a time of trials and tribulations. Is that why you have this desire to understand China and to change it?

Fei: During my lifetime, Chinese culture has been convulsed. For about 500 years, our culture was closed. Five hundred years ago, a Western culture emerged that could stand on a par with ours, and it was the constant expansion of this culture that forced us out of our isolation, causing a new culture to emerge. My family was one of the earliest to experience this new influence, and that's what I grew up in.

To understand one's life path, one has to start from the objective historical circumstances. Many choices may be available, but each of us is placed in a certain historical context, and often this determines what we end up doing.

I was born in 1910, the last year of the Qing dynasty. In 1911, the Xinhai Revolution took place and the Republican government was set up. My early education came from my parents. Childhood education is extremely important in a person's formation, and I can say it determined my whole life. After all, a person grows up within a family, so that is the starting point.

When I was born, my paternal grandmother was still alive. Her surname was Zhou. Her family had been broken up and dispersed during the turmoil of the Taiping Rebellion (1851–1864), and she became an orphan. She was adopted by my great-grandparents and given to my grandfather as a child bride. I say this because I wish to show that my family has been affected by war since my grandmother's generation.

Grandmother had two sons and one daughter. The family was what we call a "gateway family" in Tongli Town, which means it had social status, owned a fine house with a fancy gateway, and was part of the local gentry. Grandfather died when his son (my father) was still quite small, and I don't even know his name. Gentry families socialized a lot in those days, and grandfather had had a good friend named Yang Dunxi with whom he had spent a lot of time. After grandfather died, Yang betrothed his daughter to my father and thus became my maternal grandfather. However, he discovered after grandfather died that there was no male authority in the family to keep my wild uncle (father's brother) under control. So he told grandmother that he wished to bring my father up in his own family, away from the disruptive influence. He himself was a scholar of philology, and his family were rice merchants. In those days, many people ran businesses and pursued intellectual pursuits at the same time.

Grandmother, widowed and with very little education, was unable to manage my uncle, and he grew up to be a big troublemaker, to the extent that the family property was sacked by angry townsfolk. My father was unhurt because he grew up in my maternal grandfather's house, and my mother, never having left her own family, had a high status there.

Maternal grandfather was a follower of new trends and very early had come under Western cultural influences. In the year of the Empress Dowager's birthday, she had ordered an extra round of the imperial examinations, and maternal grandfather had passed at the county level and was appointed to head the Office of Education in the county, the equivalent of a provincial appointment today, so he had a fairly high social status. However, he was more interested in learning Western ways, and one indication was that he gave up this official position to accept a post as editor at the Commercial Press, situated in the Legation Quarter in Shanghai. His name is still listed among the editors of the *Ci Hai*[2] published by that Press. Another sign of this enthusiasm was how he wished his children to be educated. He sent one of his sons to Tsinghua University, and this uncle of mine was one of the first batch to be sent to the United States for continued study, in the same class as Hu Shih. Later he became a manager in a Western bank. After the Republican government was set up, my eldest uncle took up a position in Beijing as secretary general in the Executive Yuan. His name was Yang Qianli and he was well known for his calligraphy, which he had learned at home when he was young. My mother was sent to Wuben Girls' School in Shanghai and was one of the first women in China to receive a Western-style education.

My father was among the last batch to take the imperial examinations, which were eliminated soon after. Wujiang County then sponsored him to go to Japan where he studied pedagogy. He did not know Japanese so the authorities hired a Chinese-speaking teacher for him. Since Japanese and Chinese written characters have much in common, he was able to communicate with Japanese people by writing and was even able to play chess with them.

Upon his return, he set up Wujiang Middle School. Later, Mr. Zhang Qian of Nantong invited my father to go and teach there. This is when I was born, and that's why my name has "Tong" in it, to commemorate this appointment. My family was one of the earliest intellectual families to embrace Western culture and was representative of this period in China. To this day, I continue to do the same thing.

At the time of my birth, we lived in Songlin in Wujiang County, where the county magistrate was located. My mother was very modern minded and set up a new-style kindergarten where children were taught in a more Western style. My own education started there. Since the Taiping Rebellion, our Fei clan had been in decline, but my mother changed that, and our family began to prosper again, as it learned from the West. My mother was very important in our family, and she had a huge influence on me, greater than my father. The Western influence had started with my maternal grandfather, and I was brought up with these new methods. In 1920, when I graduated from primary school at the age of 10, I went to Suzhou, where my maternal grandfather lived and where the family owned a textile factory called Zhenfeng Mill. It was located at No. 72 on Shiquan Street, which actually still exists though the buildings are gone. It took a whole day by boat to get from Wujiang to Suzhou.

There I started studying in Zhenhua Girls' School. Why? Because I was a sickly child, and this school was run by Wang Jiyu, a friend of my mother, who had studied

[2] One of the most important semi-encyclopedic Chinese dictionaries.

in the United States. She began to teach me English. The school was a private one, run on the model of a missionary establishment. I have written several articles about my primary school days: *The Teaching of Love*, *An Unopened Letter*,[3] which are all in my collected works.

I studied in Zhenhua until the first year of junior middle school, when I went on to Dongwu University's affiliated middle school. This is where my childhood ended. To this day, I feel that I am like a bridge for Chinese culture to learn from Western culture. My background in traditional Chinese culture is rather poor, in this sense my maternal grandfather did not pass on his knowledge. My eldest uncle had a much better grounding in calligraphy and writing. I have over a dozen uncles; one of them, Yang Zuoyao, went to the United States and then to Hollywood where he drew animated cartoons, the first Chinese to do so. My youngest uncle named Yang Ximou was an architect who designed a number of dance halls in Shanghai. After 1949, he came to Beijing and was part of the team that designed the ten major constructions built in 1959. They were all artists.

Fang: You seem to be very interested in art too, do you think this is inherited?

Fei: I do think I have an inherited artistic aptitude but this was not developed. In school, I really liked writing. One of my articles written in junior middle school was printed in the *Youth* magazine published by the Commercial Press. I was terribly excited to see my work in black print on white paper, and this became a huge encouragement to write. I formed the habit of writing essays and jotting down my thoughts, and that's why, apart from my academic papers, I have also written many short articles and random notes.

Fang: When you were a child, what sort of a country did you think China was?

Fei: A country in a state of flux. Take my maternal grandfather, for instance. He started off in Tongli, then moved to Wujiang and then to Suzhou, in other words, from small rural town to the county seat and then to a medium-sized city like Suzhou. The family business went from selling rice to owning a textile mill and later joined with foreign capital to open a Western-style bank in Tianjin. His journey was pretty typical of a certain type of traditional intellectual who started off from a Confucian background, then embraced Western thinking, and went on to encourage his younger family members to accept a Western-style education.

Fang: It seems that your maternal grandfather had a huge influence on your intellectual formation. His attitude carried over into the whole clan. Why do you think he was able to accept Western culture so much more readily than other traditional Chinese intellectuals? What was special about him? Was he very modern in his thinking?

Fei: I don't know. At the time, he did not seem to have that much new thinking. I only know that his knowledge of traditional Chinese culture was very deep, and he often spoke to us about his philological studies, about the sources of the Chinese language, and how it had evolved, about the features of Chinese ideograms and what they meant. He also quoted lots of sayings which I have forgotten. That's why he was able to become an editor at the Commercial Press and work on *Ci Hai*. My

[3] In Chinese, *Ai de jiaoyu* (《爱的教育》), *Yifeng meiyou chai de xin* (《一封没有拆的信》).

uncles were educated in the Western style; only my eldest uncle had a very good grounding in Chinese calligraphy, stone and bronze inscriptions, and poetry.

Our family was part of the new trend of the time, thanks to his influence. Starting from my generation, we were no longer educated in the traditional way, and I grew up in a kindergarten where we were taught to sing and to play the pedal piano. All that was very new in those days.

Fang: That was in the 1920s, right?

Fei: Yes. In 1920 I was 10 years old. China was plagued by warlords and their fighting, the whole country was in turmoil. We often had to flee, and I remember once we had to run away from Wujiang back to Tongli.

Fang: How did ordinary people live?

Fei: It was pretty hard. We were a middle-income family so at least we had enough at every meal and could even have some meat. I was in charge of the accounts, and I remember every day we had seven coppers worth of meat.

Fang: How much was that?

Fei: I don't really remember. Seven coppers were about 70 cents. Rice was over a dozen cents, and then there were the vegetables, so every day we spent over 100 cents on food. We were five siblings, but an elder brother and sister were in school in Suzhou, so there were only three of us boys at home. As the youngest and least busy, my mother made me keep the daily accounts. When my brother and sister came home for the holidays, my mother, in the Western fashion, would bring out the accounts and go over them with us. She drew a diagram of red lines representing different expenses, and the thickest and longest one was school fees. Comparatively speaking, education cost the most.

Many years later, at a meeting of the CPCC, I said that the country should follow my mother's method of setting aside funds for education first. If there's a lot left over, we can spend more, if not, less. Family financial planning can apply to the nation too.

Thanks to my mother's efforts, the five of us all went on to higher education. Fei Zhendong, my eldest brother, graduated from Shanghai Dongyang University. He was one of the earliest members of the Chinese Communist Party, an organizer of the May 30, 1925, workers' strike. He was supposed to go to the Soviet Union to study, but then he went to work for a newspaper in Indonesia and lost touch with the Party, call it voluntary withdrawal. Later he joined the Democratic Alliance. Elder sister studied in Japan and later, after she came back to China, worked on improving the techniques of silkworm cultivation. Fei Qing, my third brother, read law at Dongwu University and continued his studies in Germany. After 1949, he became Provost at the University of Politics and Law in China, making him one of the most senior legal people in the country. My fourth brother was influenced by my uncle and studied architecture at Nanyang University in Shanghai. He has worked on many important construction projects.

Fang: We've been talking about your family history and how your childhood was influenced by it. There's your grandfather's grounding in Chinese culture and then later your studies abroad. Looked at this way, I think it's fair to say that you "know" both China and the West. This is extremely valuable.

Fei: I don't think I can say I "know" enough. I don't think my classical Chinese is too bad, and I actually wrote some passable articles in it. But that's language only, not the real basis of Chinese culture, by which I mean its philosophy and thought. I haven't studied those nearly enough. But you could say that I have been grafted with both cultures.

Fang: Which member of your family had the greatest influence on you?

Fei: My mother, of course. She was very forward thinking, very open. She cut her hair short very early on, favored new pedagogical methods, advocated equality between the sexes, laid great emphasis on early childhood education, and accepted new thinking from outside. We were not wealthy, just comfortably off, a middle-income family. Many of our relatives, however, were very rich and prominent.

Fang: Yet all you kids were very well educated.

Fei: This ended up having an effect on our relatives too. My paternal aunt's family took a lot of interest in me. When her husband went to Shanghai, he subscribed to *Youth* magazine for me, which aroused my interest in writing, particularly after I got published in it. This was my earliest successful submission and really affected my whole life. Writing became my biggest hobby during my school years, and I even won a literary prize when I graduated, a silver medal with "Advance the Chinese Language" inscribed on it.

In 1928, I graduated from middle school, and I was writing pretty well by then, so that's my foundation in the Chinese language. I then was admitted to Dongwu University to study medicine. In 1930, I graduated from there and went to Tsinghua University's Graduate Institute to study anthropology. Those are the experiences of my youth, and they shaped my interests and the academic path I later followed.

Fang: I am really struck by all you have said. It's like a history of modern culture and education in China and how modern Western and traditional Chinese cultures have intermingled and how a progressive old-school intellectual was influenced by Western ways and handed this down to his children.

Fei: I have described a model of new education that existed in the early years of the twentieth century. It was all private education. I attended the middle school affiliated with Dongwu University. It was a missionary institution. Missionary schools were an important channel for transmitting Western culture, which means that it first entered China through education. After Tsinghua University I went to Great Britain on the Boxer Indemnity Scholarship Fund. This was indemnity money paid by China to Western countries after the failed Boxer Rebellion in 1900 and partly used by the Americans to fund education with the objective of training a generation of people with Western ideas. This would increase the influence of the West and had a strong political motivation. The result was a number of progressive intellectuals deeply influenced by Western culture. It was precisely these people who started the May Fourth Movement (in 1919) and introduced the ideas of "science" and "democracy."

Fang: You said you first studied medicine, so why, when you went to graduate school, did you switch to anthropology? That was quite a leap from natural science to social science, don't you think?

Fei: Actually they are interconnected, because I studied physical anthropology, which needs a strong medical basis, since it studies human races, physical characteristics, and bone structures. All this needs knowledge of biology. At Tsinghua, I studied under the Russian anthropologist Shirokogoroff who was not well known in international anthropological circles, but influential in the world of biology where he achieved a great deal. He examined culture from a biological perspective.

Fang: So your academic interests cover two disciplines, biology and sociology.

Fei: But my biological knowledge is shallow, and my sociology is not that well grounded either, since I did not start from the basics. That's why I never attained a high level in either and why what I have achieved in them is a bit shaky.

Fang: You approached sociology from a biological perspective, which is very different from a purely sociological one. Maybe having two different knowledge structures enabled you to achieve as much as you have, the results of grafting together two disciplines.

Fei: Well, there are varying views on many issues, and we'll need another time to talk about this particular one.

Today we've discussed my family history, which also covers a period of history in China and all the changes that occurred. These were not political but social. Understanding the people who came from that period—their thinking, their experiences, and their path to learning—is helpful to those of us of this current generation.

Timeline of Chinese Dynasties

ca. 2070–1600 BC	Xia dynasty	
1600–1046 BC	Shang dynasty	
1046–256 BC	Zhou dynasty	
	Western Zhou (ca. 1046–771 BC)	
	Eastern Zhou (ca. 770–256 BC)	Spring and Autumn Period (770–476 BC)
		Warring States Period (475–221 BC)
221–206 BC	Qin dynasty	
206 BC–AD 220	Han dynasty	
	Western Han (206 BC–AD 25)	
	Eastern Han (AD 25–220)	
AD 220–280	Three Kingdoms Period	Wei, Shu, and Wu kingdoms
AD 265–420	Jin dynasty	
	Western Jin (AD 265–317)	
	Eastern Jin (AD 317–420)	
AD 420–589	Period of the Northern and Southern dynasties	A period of dilatability with five kingdoms founded by in succession in the north mostly by ethnic groups and four in the south
AD 581–618	Sui dynasty	
AD 618–907	Tang dynasty	
AD 907–960	Five Dynasties Period	
AD 960–1279	Song dynasty	

(continued)

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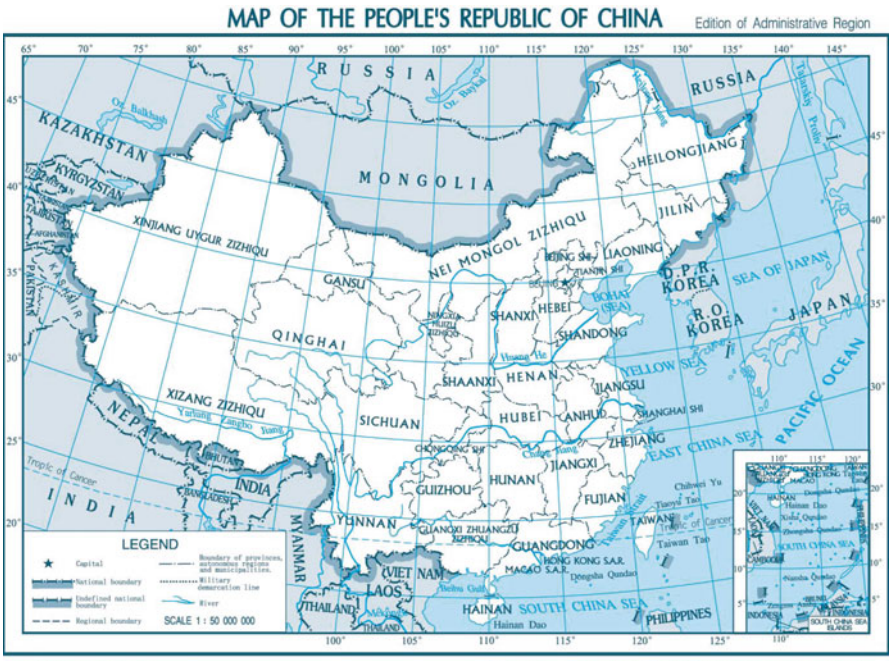
	Northern Song (960–1127)	
	Southern Song (1127–1279)	
AD 907–1125	Liao dynasty	
1038–1227	Western Xia dynasty	
1368–1644	Ming dynasty	
1644–1911	Qing dynasty	
1912–1949	Republic of China	
1949–present	People's Republic of China	

Source: Dictionary of Modern Chinese Language


MAP OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA
Edition of Administrative Region
RUSSIA
KAZAKHSTAN
KYRGYZSTAN
MONGOLIA
XINJIANG UYGUR ZIZHIQU
NEI MONGOL ZIZHIQU
HEILONGJIANG
JILIN
LIAONING
BEIJING SHI
TIANJIN SHI
GANSU
QINGHAI
SHANXI
HEBEI
BOHAI (SEA)
SHANDONG
D.P.R. KOREA
R.O. KOREA
SEA OF JAPAN
JAPAN
PACIFIC OCEAN
YELLOW SEA
SHAANXI
HENAN
JIANGSU
SHANGHAI SHI
XIZANG ZIZHIQU
SICHUAN
HUBEI
ANHUI
EAST CHINA SEA
ZHEJIANG
NEPAL
BHUTAN
INDIA
BANGLADESH
CHONGQING SHI
JIANGXI
HUNAN
GUIZHOU
FUJIAN
YUNNAN
GUANGXI ZHUANGZU ZIZHIQU
TAIWAN
Taiwan Tao
GUANGDONG
HONG KONG S.A.R.
MACAO S.A.R.
Dongsha Qundao
MYANMAR
VIET NAM
LAOS
THAILAND
HAINAN SOUTH CHINA SEA
Hainan Dao
PHILIPPINES
Tropic of Cancer
LEGEND
Capital
National boundary
Undefined national boundary
Regional boundary
Boundary of provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities
Military demarcation line
River
SCALE 1 : 50 000 000
GS (2008) 1416 号
Jun. 2008
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